

PREDATORS POP SHODDY DEVILS

By MARK EVERSON

lective memory has struck, and humiliates these Devils. I remember that they are the nps, but have forgotten how I they had to play to win the play Cup.

ould be a find not to be con- ed," Scott Stevens said. "In- of improving, we've played e since the season started. 's looks like we haven't played h."

ey have not won much lately, at all this month, losers of e straight and winless in four, a last night a different shade of some disaster.

a game they never led, they 4-3 to the Nashville Predators. Tom Fitzgerald's goal with 16.7 nds left, after they had fought k from a two-goal deficit. Then it was what they deserved.

's because we're playing stu- Bobby Holik said. "It's not e we're not working hard. We're working smart.

We're trying to complicate us. We're all over the place, ing by ourselves, and not stick- to the game plan that has ight us success."

he Predators, winners of 1-in-8, ided a stark contrast to the ls, skating in the preferred ps-and-starts while New Jersey pretty circles that left openings e exploited.

ur defense wants to get up and re goals, and they forget the n job is playing defense," Larry nson said.

Predators	4
Devils	3

Nashville 1 0 3-4
New Jersey 1 0 2-3

First Period: 1. Nashville Ronning 7 (Legwand, Korbeg) 5:04, 2. New Jersey Kelly 2 (White), 6:10. Penalties: Hulse, Nas (hooking), 10:58; Ward, NJ (hooking), 13:37.

Second Period: None. Penalties: Ward, NJ (interference), 3:30; Robinson, Nas (trough-shovel), 11:19; Hulse, Nas (hooking), 12:59; Holik, NJ (holding stick), 14:23.

Third Period: 2. Nashville Legwand 2 (Ronning) 4:14, 4. Nashville Walker 4 (Bordedeau, Houder), 13:14, 5. New Jersey Nemchynov 4 (Holik, McKay), 13:48, 6. New Jersey Rafalski 3 (Elast, Brylin), 14:14 (goal), 7. Nashville Fitzgerald 4 (Lichstein, Palonen), 19:43. Penalties: White, NJ (hooking), 6:41; Gomez, NJ (interference), 12:11; Timonen, Nas (troughing), 12:48.

Shots on goal: Nashville 14-8-14 — 36; New Jersey 12-12-10-36.

Power plays: Nashville 0 of 5; New Jersey 1 of 4. Goalsies: Nashville: Vokoun 3-3-2 (36 shots, 33 saves); New Jersey: Brodeur 5-3-2 (36-30). A: 15,978 (19,040).

Referee: Greg Kinnear; Brian Murphy; Linesmen: Anthony Senzoni, Stephen Proulx.

Coming back from a groin injury, Martin Brodeur was excellent in defeat, still looking for his 250th career victory.

"I felt it, it's there," Brodeur said of his groin injury, "but it didn't interfere with the way I played the game. It's too bad I couldn't come up with one more save."

The Devils, who had scored only one goal in each of their two previous home games (0-1-1), fell behind on Cliff Ronning's seventh of the year 5:04 into play. Stevens had been lured to the middle toward Ronning, who threw the puck in the right corner. David Legwand centered back, off Stevens' skate, and Ronning slipped around Brian



CLIFF NOTE: Predators' Cliff Ronning sends shot past Martin Brodeur in Devils' 4-3 loss last night. N.Y. Post: Nury Hernandez

Rafalski to shoot between the legs of Brodeur.

Steve Kelly answered 1:46 later, shooting rather than passing on a 2-on-1 with Ed Ward. Coming down the left slot with the passing lane blocked, Kelly picked the high short side over Tomas Vokoun's glove for his second this season. Nashville was still without ex-Devil goalie Mike Dunham, who opened the season 3-2-2 before suffering a left knee sprain.

The Predators regained the lead at 6:14 of the third on a blunder by Rafalski. Legwand had squeezed past Stevens at the right boards, but Rafalski was first to the puck in the corner. Rafalski then put a blind pass into the slot, on Ronning's tape, and Brodeur was left without hope on the 2-on-0 feed for Legwand's second of the year.

"You can't give away goals like that and expect to win," Robinson said.

Stevens was caught again as Scott Walker made it 3-1 at 13:14, Nas sneaking behind the captain to

take Sebastian Bordeleau's 4-on-0 feed and tuck his fourth around Brodeur.

During that same 4-on-0, Nemchynov scored his fourth of the year to start the Devil comeback, converting Holik's left-wing pass to the right edge at 13:48.

Only 26 seconds later, Rafalski atoned for his earlier mistake by tying the game with a power-play goal, beating Vokoun's short side from the left circle after a handoff from Patrik Elias.

But with 16.7 seconds left in regulation, Ken Daneyko was unable to stop a pass behind the net to Greg Johnson in the left circle. Johnson's feed was steered by Fitzgerald and went in off Colin White's stick.

Petr Sykora sat out with a re-aggravated groin injury. He had played three straight after sitting out three with the groin pull... Jay Pandolfo (shoulder) remained idle, as did Sascha Goc, from knee arthroscopy.

Iron Man Leetch put on a show

By THOMAS CULLEN

Even after 14 years in the league, Brian Leetch continues to amaze. Tuesday night he was the Marathon Man, playing for 35:22 of the Blueshirts' 4-3 win over the Oilers. Getting Leetch off the ice was like trying to pry a child away from his favorite toy on Christmas morning.

"You have to coach him to get a true appreciation of him," Ron Low said after yesterday's optional skate at Rye. "Or else you have to be playing against him on a regular basis five or six times a year." Given a choice of the two, Low is glad Leetch is on his side.

After an injury-riddled 1999-2000 campaign, Leetch seems to be back to his old self. Tuesday he scored twice and could have easily had four goals,

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according to Low. Leetch logged so much time due to the injuries to the Blueshirts' defense corps. Vladimir Malakov is still out with a left knee injury. He saw a doctor Monday night and he is taking it day to day.

"I don't know if there is anyone better right now," Low said of Leetch. "Some of the things he does are miraculous."

Maybe the reason for his rejuvenated play is not having the burden of the captaincy. Lake Hester Frynne, Leetch never really felt comfortable with the letter on his sweater. Or maybe it's just having his friend Mark Messier back in the room. Whatever the reason, Leetch has been playing sound hockey on both ends of the ice.

In his modest fashion, the former captain paid credit to his teammates for helping the Blueshirts crawl out of the 2-0 hole they dug themselves into on Tuesday.

"Sandy McCarthy got the crowd into it with that fight (against George Laraque)," Leetch said. "It was positive, right after they got that second goal, that we kept working."

It was Leetch scoring on the power play less than three minutes after that bout that pulled the Blueshirts within one and got them going. The Rangers are now at .500 and are looking to make it four wins in their last five when they take on the Capitals tonight in D.C.

"We're making small steps," Leetch said. "Mike (Richter) has been a big help to us coming back from the knee injury, and that's allowed us to gain confidence."

The Rangers sent defenseman Tomas Kloucek and forward Johan Witthall to Hartford Kloucek played with the Wolf Pack last night and will rejoin the big club for tonight's game.

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NEW YORK POST

A run of double vision

By ADRIATIK REXHEPI

Double the pleasure, double the fun.

Alvin and Calvin Harrison, the twins who helped the U.S. 4x400-meter relay team to a gold medal at the Sydney Olympics, look alike, share the same interests, and even have a similar fashion sense.

The 26-year-old runners, who could easily be the latest installment of the Doublemint twins, claimed that the only real difference between them is that Alvin likes olives, and Calvin doesn't.

While they're enjoying their recent success, they also have their eyes set on the 2001 World Championships and Goodwill Games.

"The plan for now is to go to the World Championships and win the World Championships," Calvin said at the New York Athletic Club in mid-Manhattan yesterday. "My brother and I are both in the 200- and 400-meter relays. Our goal is to dominate the World Championships."

In the meantime, the two will be coming back to New York in late November to discuss everything from their personal lives to their up-and-coming track plans when they'll appear on an episode of "Oprah," set to air on Dec. 1.

They claim that there will be a special announcement on the show, but gave no indication as to what exactly it will be.

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