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# Falcons hope to bring home hardware

Fuller likes his team's performance heading into title game



Fitchburg State head coach Dean Fuller likes his team's chances in the MASCAC title game against Plymouth State on Saturday night. (Sentinel & Enterprise / Gary Fournier)

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By **JARED CATALANO** | Correspondent  
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FITCHBURG — The Fitchburg State University hockey team is making its first appearance in the Massachusetts State Collegiate Athletic Conference (MASCAC) championship game since 2018.

The Falcons will travel to Hanaway Rink in Plymouth, New Hampshire, to take on the top-seeded Plymouth State Panthers Saturday night. The Falcons have a tough matchup ahead of them facing the defending MASCAC champions.

The Panthers are not only the reigning champions; they have held the MASCAC title for the past four seasons.

When asked how the past week of practice and preparation leading up to this game has been, Fitchburg State head coach Dean Fuller said he's liked what he's seen.

“These guys have worked hard all year long. The practices this past week have been upbeat, everybody's been working hard,” Fuller said. “We're just trying to make sure we've dotted the I's and crossed our T's.”

Plymouth State finished this past season with a 18-1-2 record in conference play, only losing to Westfield State. When asked about how the Falcons matchup with the Panthers, Fuller liked what his group brings to the table.

“I think that we have 4 solid lines, our defense is experienced and we have had great goaltending this year,” he said. “I think that it’s going to be important for us to make sure all our shifts are solid and we take care of our defensive zones first and get pucks deep on them. It’s been a great group to coach.”

The Falcons have had great depth all season, with every player who has appeared in five or more games notching at least a point this season. The offense has been great averaging just over three goals per game on 35 shots per game led by their top goal scorer freshman Michael Imala (10 goals).

The goaltending this season has been outstanding, led by freshman Frederick Soderberg. Soderberg is currently second in the MASCAC in save percentage at .931, as well as goals against average (2.44).

Fuller noted the key to bringing a MASCAC championship back to Fitchburg will be staying disciplined.

“We have to stay out of the penalty box. They’ve got an excellent power play and they’ve got the best player in the league in Will Redick,” the coach said. “So we obviously have to keep an eye on him. But I think most importantly stay out of the penalty box and be able to play them five-on-five.”