

Utah ends GCU D1 Men's Hockey's 12-game winning streak

12th-ranked Utes put distance between them & 13th-ranked Lopes with weekend sweep

Friday night started calm.

Then the 2nd period came around.

In a matchup between two nationally ranked teams, the No. 13 Grand Canyon University Men's Hockey team dropped a 4-2 decision to No. 12 University of Utah on Friday night at AZ Ice Arcadia in Phoenix. The loss dropped the curtain on the Lopes' 12-game winning streak – the longest in the history of the program.

Special teams proved to be the difference. The Lopes and Utes stayed closely matched throughout the night – especially in the 2nd period – trading momentum and creating scoring opportunities at even strength. Utah finished with a 34-28 edge in shots on goal, but GCU held their own in five-on-five situations. Two Utes' power-play goals ultimately shifted the outcome, despite a strong performance from Lopes' goalie Dmytro Kubrytskyi, who stopped 30 shots on goal to keep his team within reach late.

"Our guys killed well, but it's just about getting the bounces at the right time, executing, and staying out of the box a little more," said GCU Head Coach Daniel Roy.

Despite the special teams' challenges, the Lopes found their momentum in the 2nd period. GCU freshman Evan Leden opened the scoring for GCU, tying the game at 1-1 on an assist from Caden Henrikson. Six minutes later, GCU's Benjamin Oakland capitalized on the power play to even the score again at 2-2.

GCU continued to battle in the 3rd period, but Utah took back the lead with two goals – one on a power play. Trailing by two late in the game, the Lopes pulled Kubrytskyi with just under four minutes left, hoping to create an aggressive push on offense but unable to find the back of the net.

"We don't change much," said Roy. "It's the same process that got us the winning streak. We just have to find ways to execute when we have an opportunity."

The Lopes returned to the rink for a rematch on Saturday, finding themselves once more in a neck-and-neck competition, but never led in falling to the Utes, 2-1. All three goals were scored in the 2nd period, with Triston Tabucol providing the Lopes' lone score 12 minutes into the frame.

Later this week, the Lopes will travel south to Tucson as they face off against the Wildcats of the University of Arizona on Thursday at 7:30 PM and Saturday at 1 PM. Then they'll return home for their final two-game home series of the season against top-5 power UNLV Thursday and Friday, February 5 and 6 at AZ Ice Arcadia.