



PRESS RELEASE



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LAKE SUPERIOR STATE OVERWHELMS BEMIDJI STATE, 4-1, TO ADVANCE TO WCHA CHAMPIONSHIP GAME

Lakers will meet UP rival Northern Michigan in a battle for the Jeff Sauer Trophy on Saturday

MANKATO, Minn. – March 19, 2021 – Hampus Eriksson had a hand in three goals and **Mareks Mitens** turned away 26 shots as second-seeded Lake Superior State took down No. 4 seed Bemidji State, 4-1, in the WCHA semifinals on Friday at the Mayo Clinic Health System Event Center in Mankato, Minn.

The victory was the 1,000th win in Lake Superior State hockey history and advances the Lakers to Saturday's WCHA championship game to face No. 6 seed Northern Michigan. The championship game appearance is the first for Lake Superior State in its WCHA era.

"It was a big game with where both teams are sitting nationally," Lake Superior State head coach **Damon Whitten** said after the contest. "A lot of eyes on this game across the college hockey world. I think the nation saw who we are and who we've been all season long. We've had a really good season and we have a really good hockey team. We've got a really strong senior class and they showed up tonight. We showed why we belong in the tournament."

Lake Superior State opened the scoring at 13:28 of the first period when **Brandon Puricelli** pounced on a rebound in front of the Bemidji net and banged home his seventh goal of the season to put the Lakers up 1-0.

After a back-and-forth second period that saw the Lakers kill off a pair of penalties, Lake Superior State added two late goals in the frame to go up 3-0 at the second intermission. A **Jacob Bengtsson** shot from the blueline off a feed from Eriksson found its way past Beaver goaltender **Zach Driscoll** at 15:31 of the frame before Eriksson scored on a feed from **Yuki Miura** off of a Bemidji State turnover at 18:14.

Lukas Kaelble pushed the Laker lead to 4-0 early in the third period on an assist from Eriksson at 4:14. Bemidji State ended Mitens' shutout bid with a power-play goal from captain **Ethan Somoza** at 16:36.

Bemidji State went to an extra attacker following the Somoza goal but was unable to cut into the Laker lead as Mitens finished with 26 saves on 27 Beaver shots.

The win extends what has been a nearly two-month hot streak for the Lakers. Lake Superior State is now 12-3 over its last 15 games dating to Feb. 1 and 14-16-1 since Jan. 1. The 12 wins since the start of February is the most by any team in the country in that span. In defeating No. 13/12-ranked Bemidji State tonight, the Lakers are now 5-4 against ranked teams this season with all five victories coming away from home.

Offensively, LSSU have now scored 51 goals in their last 15 games dating to Feb. 1 and registered 137 points, both of which lead the nation during that time frame. Defensively, the Lakers have surrendered two goals or fewer in 20 of their 27 contests this season.

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PRESS RELEASE



2021 WCHA Postseason Tournament, presented by SPIRE Credit Union

The WCHA will crown a playoff champion at the WCHA Postseason Tournament, presented by [SPIRE Credit Union](#). The tournament winner will receive an automatic bid to the 2021 NCAA Division I Men's Ice Hockey Championship.

Jeff Sauer WCHA Championship Trophy, presented by Anderson's Pure Maple Syrup

The winner of the 2021 WCHA Postseason tournament will once again receive the Jeff Sauer WCHA Championship Trophy, presented by [Anderson's Pure Maple Syrup](#).

About the Western Collegiate Hockey Association Men's League

The Western Collegiate Hockey Association, among the most historic, tradition-rich and successful conferences in all of collegiate athletics, is marking its 69th season of men's competition in 2020-21. The 10-team NCAA Division I conference consists of the University of Alabama in Huntsville (Chargers), the University of Alaska Anchorage (Seawolves), the University of Alaska (Nanooks), Bemidji State University (Beavers), Bowling Green State University (Falcons), Ferris State University (Bulldogs), Lake Superior State University (Lakers), Michigan Technological University (Huskies), Minnesota State University (Mavericks) and Northern Michigan University (Wildcats). For more information, visit wcha.com.

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