

March 26, 2021

North Haven Hockey Gets Redemption Claiming SCC/SWC Division II Title

West Haven, CT - North Haven goalie Andrew Sacco is used to being in the spotlight in big games. He had one final chance in his high school career and he was going to take advantage of it.

The North Haven boys hockey team rode the senior goaltender's play between the pipes to the SCC/SWC Division II crown. Sacco posted a shutout and third-seeded North Haven beat fifth-seed Cheshire 3-0 at Bennett Rink on March 26, 2021. This was North Haven's first SCC/SWC boys hockey title.



Sacco, who led Lyman Hall to the 2019 CIAC Division II title, transferred to North Haven and led the Indians to the SCC/SWC championship game, a year after falling in the finals last year. Of course, the pandemic eliminated the state tournaments each of the last two years.

Sacco needed to be on top of his game as it took until late in the second period for the Indians to get on the scoreboard.

Aaron Racino scored the game's first goal, the eventual game-winner, with 3:04 left in the second period. He took a feed in the slot from Jake Hines and beat Cheshire goalie Amaan Chaudry over his left shoulder.

The back-breaker came with six seconds left in the period. Justin Pniewski, on assists from Racino and Hines, scored on the power play.

“North Haven is a really good team,” Cheshire coach Anthony Giusto told GameTimeCT.com. “I thought we hung in there in the first period and even in the second. We had a lot of good chances. When they got that first goal, it made it tougher on us. Down two, it was a much deeper mountain to climb.”

Sacco took care of the rest. He only faced 20 shots but stopped them all. He made six saves in the final period, including twice thwarting sniper attempts from Cheshire’s Thor Novicelli in a mid-period sequence.

The Indians put the game away when Hines scored with 8:59 left in the game to produce the final score.

“They put the pressure on in the third and I said to myself they were coming out hot,” Sacco told GameTimeCT.com. “They were not going away easily. Jake (Hines) scored that goal and I think it took the wind out of them.

COACHES QUOTE

“It is such a credit to the kids,” North Haven coach Chris Avena told GameTimeCT.com. “They work so hard, especially in this tough year. They are a great group. It really feels great to get this.”

North Haven 3, Cheshire 0

Cheshire 0 0 0 – 0

North Haven 0 2 1 – 3

2nd Period: N – Aaron Racino (Jake Hines) 3:04; N – Justin Pniewski (Jake Hines, Aaron Racino) 0:06; **3rd Period:** N – Jake Hines (Aaron Racino) 8:59; **Shots:** C – 20; N – 23; **Saves:** C: Amaan Chaudhry – 20; N: Andrew Sacco – 20