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(Neb)-Hot-Shooting Hardrockers Top Cold-Shooting Eagles

By: John Axtell Posted at: 02/02/2019 11:23 PM

Kaleb Center, CSC Sports Information Director [Box Score](#)

RAPID CITY, S.D. – Saturday night's Rocky Mountain Athletic Conference men's basketball clash in Rapid City followed a formula reminiscent of the one played Friday in Spearfish. Chadron State College, entering the game one of the league's top three-point threats, went 4-for-13 from the arc and hit just 40 percent from the floor in an 80-59 loss at South Dakota School of Mines & Technology.

The loss drops CSC under .500 overall, at 10-11, for the first time since its last road trip three weeks ago. After Saturday's RMAC games, the Eagles are alone in eighth place in the league, with an 8-7 mark in league play.

The Hardrockers improved to 10-13 overall (7-8 RMAC) with the win.

As was the case with the previous game, the Eagles never took a lead in the game, however despite giving up an early run by their opponent, they battled in the closing minutes of the first half.

The home team got up 20-4 at 11:42 in the first half, before Chadron State was able to gain traction. SDSMT's 6-9 freshman forward Mitchell Sueker was instrumental in the run, with 12 of the Hardrockers' 20 points. CSC meanwhile, shot 1-for-7.

Chadron State finally got its second field goal of the night with 9:27 showing on the first period clock. Freshman [Jacob Jefferson](#) buried his first of two three-pointers in the first half to stem the onslaught by South Dakota Mines. He would go on to shoot a perfect 2-of-2 from the arc and 4-of-4 total to go to halftime with 10 points, his single-game best.

That performance sparked CSC's best-shooting seven-minute stretch of the game, where the Eagles closed the game to 32-27 with 2:34 remaining until the half.

At the break, South Dakota Mines led 37-30. Sueker, who averaged 12.9 points entering Saturday, had nearly half of the Hardrockers' scoring at the midpoint, with 18 at halftime. He finished with a game-high 32, his best output in 2018-19.

Chadron State saw the second half get away from it, just like it had the night before, although this time, the team improved from 35 percent shooting in the first half to 46 percent in the second. [Diontae Champion's](#) dunk with 14:42 showing closed the game to 46-42, and that would be the closest the Eagles came to tying. The Eagles managed one field goal in a 10-minute span in the second half. During that span, Sueker had back to back plays in the paint that gave the Hardrockers their first 20-point lead and their largest lead, going up 70-47 just under the five-minute mark.

SDSMT rode out the final five minutes by continuing to knock down shots, and held onto its 20-point margin at the final whistle.

The Hardrockers' 52.8 percent shooting was the third-highest against the Eagles all season.

CSC senior forward [Jeremy Ruffin](#) led the Eagles with 19 points on 7-of-10 field goals. He also led his team with seven rebounds. Ruffin's 19 points are his career best in four years as a college basketball player.

Chadron State is back on the road next week, with games at Colorado School of Mines, which remains undefeated at 15-0, and the University of Colorado Colorado Springs, now 9-6 in the RMAC and tied for fifth.