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The Blues found what they have been missing for the past month.

Going 4-4-5 in their past 13 games (including regular season and playoffs), the Blues received a solid effort from their entire roster to blank the San Jose Sharks 3-0 in game two of their first round series.

The win is the first playoff victory for the Blues in eight years and two days (4-1 victory over the San Jose Sharks on April 12, 2004).

“We’ve been pretty good all year [at] stepping up and looking at things that we’ve needed to improve on,” defenseman Barret Jackman said. “We played a little more of a complete game.”

The victory even included help from backup goaltender Brian Elliott, who made a relief appearance for starter Jaroslav Halak.

Halak was taken out of the game at 1:07 of the second period after Jackman slid into him as he made a save on Sharks forward Martin Havlat. Halak had 12 saves before leaving the game.

Elliott stepped in and made 17 saves to complete the team shutout.

“You prepare every game like you’re going to play,” Elliott said. “It’s not like I was nonchalant before the game. I want to play and be in there when I get a chance you have to be prepared.”

Blues Head Coach Ken Hitchcock said that Halak suffered a lower-body injury and will be

re-evaluated Sunday. He and Peoria Rivermen goaltender Jake Allen will both make the trip to San Jose.

The Blues jumped out to a 1-0 lead at 1:31 of the first period, when Blues forward Vladimir Sobotka fired a shot from the wing. Sharks goaltender Antti Niemi stopped most of the shot but it fell to his side. Sharks defenseman Marc-Edouard Vlasic attempted to scoop the puck out of danger but inadvertently shot it into his team's net.

"[Sobotka] just puts it on net and the puck is lying there," said Blues winger David Perron. "Their d-men know that our other guys are coming with a lot of pressure and he wants to move it out of there really quick and he puts it in his own net."

Backes put the Blues up 2-0 at 13:49 of the second period after line-mate T.J. Oshie weaved in-and-out of Sharks defenders to find Backes waiting at the left-wing faceoff dot.

"I thought I was going to get caught behind the net by Marleau," said Oshie. "I just ducked under a check and was able to get around another guy and saw Backes screaming down the back door. [If] that doesn't go in, I'm maybe getting yelled at. But it went in and it was good to get that first one."

"He's done that many times this year and typically I fan on the puck or dump it in," added Backes. "Luckily I hit the net."

Andy McDonald added a late third period power-play goal to cap off the 3-0 win.

Grit and feisty play were not missing from this game. There were 122 penalty minutes handed out between the two teams, including eight fighting majors and five misconduct penalties.

One of the most surprising fights of the NHL season came halfway through the second period, when offensive defenseman Kris Russell and goal-scorer Joe Pavelski dropped the gloves after

a scrum ensued in the Blues goalmouth.

“He’s probably stronger than people expect him to be,” Perron said of his teammate. “I think he did a good job there with taking Pavelski out for five minutes.”

Hits were common throughout the game and it led to a melee at the final buzzer. 88 penalty minutes were handed out by the officials at the 20:00 mark of the third period, including fighting majors to Sobotka, Jackman and Roman Polak of the Blues and Dominic Moore, Justin Braun and Douglas Murray of the Sharks.

“It’s high emotions,” said Blues Captain David Backes. “They’re playing for their lives and we’re playing for our lives. It’s a physical game and each team thinks they had a few liberties taken on them. That’s how you respond in the game of hockey.”

Resulting in the final scrum, Dominic Moore seemed to take a late punch from Sobotka after Moore had already hit the ice. Sharks Head Coach Todd McLellan was not too pleased about the final fisticuffs.

“If you’re talking about the instigator, the sucker punch, a blow to the head, the broken nose, what do you think I thought of it?” McLellan said. “It’s everything that we’re trying to get rid of.”

Coach Hitchcock thought that the Sharks were the better team to start the game but the Blues slowly took control throughout the night.

“I thought we grew up a lot today as a team because of what happened in the first period,” Hitchcock said. “They pushed us hard. They have that experience of being a veteran team, knowing what it’s like this time of year and they shoved us hard. I liked the way that we responded after that. We bent a little bit in the first period, came back on the power-play right at the end and played very well in the second period. We grew up to the level of what it takes to win against a team that knows how to do it.”

For 10 players in the Blues' lineup, this was their first NHL playoff victory.

"That's a big step to be able to do that," Hitchcock said on the subject. "It adds a lot of confidence."

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