



Under pressure: MK Lightning defence try to get in a block in front of netminder Barry Hollyhead.

Pictures: Jez Tibbetts

# Lightning play-off blow as Wildcats bite back

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**MK LIGHTNING** suffered a cruel blow to their play-off final hopes at the end of a drama-packed weekend.

Joel Petkoff's sudden-death overtime strike saw Swindon Wildcats beat Lightning 2-1 at the Link Centre on Sunday.

The result sets up a nail-biting clash against Bracknell, with three teams tied on four points behind leaders Slough.

It was a disappointing end to a weekend which started promisingly at Planet Ice.

But 24 hours after hammering the Wildcats 6-1, Lightning were exposed with just 34.8 seconds



**Mikko Skinnari** tackles Stewart Tait

remaining on the clock.

With penalty shots looming, Petkoff hit past Lightning netminder Barry Hollyhead from long range to snatch victory.

Wildcats had taken a 1-0 lead on

2.02 when Matty Davies received the puck on the right from Wayne Fiddes, skipped past a couple of challenges and squeezed it past Hollyhead from a tight angle.

Adam Radmall, Gary Clarke and Matt Towalski went close for Lightning before Poole took control on the power play on 6.43.

The coach fed Mikko Skinnari who drove the puck from distance, beyond Craze's grasp to equalise.

On Saturday netminder Barry Hollyhead was in inspired form, saving shot after shot.

At the other end, Lightning struck first at 5.25, Ales Perez feeding Toni Alasaarela, who smashed the puck past the helpless Nathan Craze.

The pair combined again to add another, before a turnover on centre

ice led to a third in the 16th minute.

Petkoff grabbed a consolation goal with an excellent shot over Hollyhead's shoulder.

McPherson and Poole stretched the visitor's defence on the counter attack, creating space for Clarke to score a fourth at 36.27.

The win was wrapped up at 52.45, a long pass from McPherson finding Towalski, who finished with ease.

Poole completed the rout with his second of the night but it will be Sunday's performance that sticks in the memory ahead of a nerve-shredding double with Bracknell this weekend.

Lightning are at home to Bracknell Bees on Saturday, face-off is at 7pm.

The return leg is on Sunday, face-off at 6pm.