

LEEDS KNIGHTS may not sit top of the NIHL National standings after the latest weekend of action, but there were still plenty of positives to take from their two performances.

The Knights got their weekend off to a bang when they became the first team to beat Romford Raiders on their own ice on Saturday night, returning home with both points on the back of a handsome 4-2 victory.

And it looked like it was going to be a four-point weekend when, with just 19 seconds remaining of their clash The Castle against Milton Keynes Lightning, they led 2-1.

But the Lightning - whose 6-3 win on Friday night had seen them briefly replace Leeds at the top - levelled through Dillon Lawrence.

The Lightning then took the extra point on offer via a shootout, moving back ahead of the Knights by one point at the top of the standings and with a game in hand.

The Knights had enjoyed the better of the first 40 minutes against Milton Keynes, forging ahead initially through Matt Barron, who fired home his 13th of the campaign at 10.58.

Chances continued to be at a premium at both ends in a second period that was similarly tight to the first, but the Knights were the ones to make theirs count, doubling their lead through Matt Bissonnette at 37.38.

With just under five minutes left, it looked positive for the Knights, but their lead was halved at 55.19 by Ed Knaggs, ensuring a nervous finale that was capped by Lawrence's oh-so-late equaliser.

Overtime couldn't separate the two teams, meaning a shoot-out was required.

Leeds edged 2-1 ahead through successful strikes from Haywood and Bissonnette, but the Lightning levelled through Ross Venus, adding to Lawrence's earlier conversion.

In the fifth round, Jordan Buesa was unable to convert, allowing Lightning player-coach Tim Wallace to secure the extra point when it came to his turn.

On Saturday, the Knights twice came from behind to secure a hard-fought road win.

Oli Endicott struck first for the defending champions in the 35th minute to cancel out Jake Sylvester's sixth-minute shorthanded opener.

Shaun Miller then edged the hosts ahead again early in the third period and it wasn't until the last 10 minutes that the Knights came good.

Haywood pulled the visitors level for a second time at 51.28 but it was a Barron strike - with just 130 seconds remaining - that put Leeds ahead for the first time on the night.

As the Raiders pulled their goalie in a desperate attempt to force the game into overtime, Haywood added an empty net strike with just 14 seconds remaining.