

WSHL WEEKLY NOTES 02.20.18 – MID-WESTERN DIVISION



Photo provided by: Mark Mauno

DALLAS SNIPERS (13-31-0, 26 pts)

WSHLDallasSnipers.pointstreaksites.com

[@DallasSnipers](https://twitter.com/DallasSnipers)

Defenseman Arvidas Domeika notched his fourth goal of the year and Michal Pistak scored his 13th strike of the season on Sunday, marking the only goals the Snipers were able to get past OKC all weekend in a three-game sweep. Both goals were scored with Dallas on the man advantage.

The Snipers had entered the weekend with a six-game winning streak and had been playing well of late, but the Blazers are a team capable of scoring in bunches and the Snipers became the unwilling recipient of that firepower.

Goalie Manny Legace made 45 saves on Saturday, 19 in the first period, and Evan Williams stopped 39 in Sunday's 6-2 loss.

Sterling Cooper's 25-45-65 line leads the team and Jaroslav Vasicek's 26-33-59 has him in the team lead for goals.

The Snipers travel to El Paso for their final road games of the year before playing their final series of the season at home against Springfield. Dallas hasn't been able to stop either team this year, but have managed some close games with the Express and will look to jump into the playoffs on a strong note when they end their regular season with Springfield.

At the trade deadline, the Snipers signed 18-year old defenseman Nicklas Pehl from Germany.

EL PASO RHINOS (43-1-1, 87 pts)

www.ElPasoRhinos.com

[@El_Paso_Rhinos](#)

The El Paso Rhinos have only one regulation loss and an overtime loss on their record this season and if their three-game sweep of Wichita is any indication, that's how they'll end the season.

Their 45 goals scored marked their highest three-game mark all year including their two highest scoring games of the season.

Austin Simpson dropped nine goals on Wichita giving him 32 on the year.

Some new Rhinos chipped in against the Jr. Thunder. Matthew Kesserling scored a goal in his first game with El Paso and Nikita Pintusov scored six goals over the weekend including the hat trick on Sunday. Pintusov now has a 6-1-7 line in his first five games with El Paso after scoring 32-22-54 with Valencia.

Jakob Kranabetter, who is the WSHL's all-time assists leader, now has six goals in six games with El Paso after scoring a half-dozen times against Wichita.

El Paso will look to close out one of the greatest seasons in the history of the WSHL with six straight home games against Dallas and the Jr. Thunder. El Paso is hosting this year's Thorne Cup Championship, so look for the Rhinos to begin their charge for the Cup in convincing fashion.

OKLAHOMA CITY BLAZERS (35-7-2, 72 pts)

www.OKCityHockey.com

[@OKCBlazersWSHL](#)

The Oklahoma City Blazers were frustrated by Springfield a week prior and took out their frustrations on Dallas, scoring 26 goals in the three-game sweep of their Mid-Western Division rivals.

Griffin Wiencek's hat trick in Friday's win gave him 32 goals on the year and a 32-52-83 line on the season.

Bobby Cloutier's shutouts on Friday and Saturday give him six on the season. Cloutier (2.40/.921) earned the sweeping victory on Sunday for his 25th victory, good for second overall in the league.

Ivan Bondarenko scored a goal and an assist on Saturday, giving him 100 points on the season with 49 goals and 51 assists. That leads the Mid-Western Division in both goals and points. It's El Paso and OKC at the top of the scoring list in the division, and while Josh Chamberlain's 33-56-89 line technically has him in third, Jakob Karanabetter is second, but has only been in the division for a few weeks, so we'll count Chamberlain as the second-highest scorer in the Mid-Western.

The Blazers' 312 goals on the season puts them in the top-3 in scoring and their 99 goals against is the fourth-best number in the WSHL.

The Blazers picked up forwards Joseph Hebert (44-75-119 in 88 games with Valencia) and Jason Hickman (34-67-101 in 87 games with Valencia) from the Flyers at the trade deadline, giving OKC even more firepower.

This is a squad with very few, if any, weaknesses and they'll be ready to go come playoff time.

SPRINGFIELD EXPRESS (23-16-6, 52 pts)

www.SpringfieldExpress.com

@_ExpressHockey

The Springfield Express were off this past weekend, and are sporting a 12-4-0 record since the Western States Shootout as they look to close out their regular season.

Nikita Sokov leads the team with a 30-39-69 line and the Ledenkov brothers have been neck-and-neck with each other all season. Arkhip has scored a 31-31-62 line this season while brother Filimon's 19-41-60 line leads the team in assists.

Goalies Kayne Pasquet, Chad Purdy, and Connor Green have been consistent for the Express all season, with each posting better than an .860 SV%.

Springfield will close out their regular season with a trip to Dallas to face the Snipers in two weeks, and at home to against Wichita.

So, that'll be two weekends off between their two-win three-game series with OKC two weeks ago. They'll look to roll into the playoffs and provide this year's upset.

WICHITA JR. THUNDER (3-39-0, 6 pts)

www.WichitaJuniorThunder.com

@JrThunderHockey

The Wichita Jr. Thunder were bested by El Paso in three-straight games over the weekend. Hunter Litman, Braeden Thomas, and Garret Ropka each scored for Wichita against the league's best team.

After Brett Cameron scored his first junior goal two weeks ago against Dallas, Ropka's strike this past weekend marked his first in the WSHL.

Thomas now leads the team with an 11-10-21 line with Tyler Inlow not far behind scoring a 9-10-19 line on the year after scoring two assists against the Rhinos.

Tyler Alverson and John Lebar also added assists this weekend. Lebar's six penalty minutes on the weekend moved him to the team lead with 121 PIMs.

The Jr. Thunder will make the playoffs, but they're going to have a a few bumps along the way with another tilt against El Paso sandwiched between series with OKC and Springfield.

This upcoming weekend's series with the Blazers will mark the Jr. Thunder's final series at home.

--- Tyler Whidden for Harrington Sports Media