

WSHL WRAP-UP; February 15 – February 18, 2018



Photo provided by: Mark Mauno

LONG BEACH BOMBERS @ FRESNO MONSTERS **Fresno's return to Selland Arena a rousing success**

02.15.18 – Fresno 4, Long Beach 1

02.16.18 – Fresno 3, Long Beach 2

02.17.18 – Fresno 5, Long Beach 4

The Fresno Monsters, in an attempt to demonstrate that ice hockey is a viable, sustainable entertainment opportunity at Selland Arena, played their final three home games of the regular season at their former home. They hosted the Western Division leaders, the Long Beach Bombers and drew well, treating around 4,000 fans per game to three entertaining junior hockey games – and three wins for the home team.

The three Monster wins, along with Ontario's sweep of Seattle, has created a bit of a crowd at the top of the Western Division standings. The Bombers are still in front, but there are now just five points separating three teams with Fresno a single point behind second-place Ontario.

Dalyon Mannon scored his 62nd and 63rd goals of the season, and Max Karlenzig stopped 31 of 32 shots, as the Monsters won 4-1 on Thursday.

The Monsters led, 2-0, after the first period on goals by Deivids Tempelmanis and Ondrej Gabrhelik and Karlenzig did the rest.

Fresno won Friday's game, 3-2. Jake Chartier scored what turned out to be the game-winning goal 1:41 into the third period. As Nakita Anistratenko was taken into the right-wing boards by a Long Beach defender just inside the Bombers blue line, he played the puck out to Chartier who broke in alone with Adam Polomsky. Chartier passed the puck and Polomsky one-touched it back across to him for the tap-in goal and a two-goal Monster lead.

Lukas Moravsky scored with 2:20 left to get the Bombers within a goal, but they could not get the equalizer past Karlenzig (27 saves).

The fans were treated to another one-goal game in Saturday's series finale. Mannon scored the only goal of the first period, then both teams scored three times in the second. The Bombers scored three in a row to go ahead, 3-1, then Fresno came roaring back with three of their own in front of the raucous Selland Arena crowd.

Fresno took a 4-3 lead into the third period but the Bombers, feeling their division lead shrink and needing to salvage some points from the weekend, showed some life. Anton Ahlin knotted the score, 4-4, at 9:44, but Mannon replied with his 65th goal of the season just 10 seconds later to give the Monsters the lead again and they protected it the rest of the way for the sweep.

Karlenzig made it three wins over the division leaders in as many nights, making 12 of his 24 saves in the first period.

Fresno's Logan Domagala collected three assists.

OGDEN MUSTANGS @ IDAHO ICECATS
Thorne Cup contenders go toe to toe in Idaho

02.16.18 – Idaho 4, Ogden 2

02.17.18 – Idaho 5, Ogden 4

02.18.18 – Ogden 7, Idaho 6 (SO)

Two serious contenders for the Thorne Cup – the Idaho IceCats and the Ogden Mustangs – met for a three-game series in Idaho. All three games went down to the wire with the IceCats winning the first two before losing the finale in a shootout. The two points from Sunday's win allowed the Mustangs to hold onto a share of the Mountain Division lead.

The IceCats led, 1-0, after Friday's first period on a goal by Blake Nelson, but Ogden scored 17 seconds into the second period to knot things up, 1-1.

Shortly after the faceoff to start the second period, Ogden defenseman Austin Dittenhafer dumped the puck into the Idaho zone to the left of IceCats netminder Jacob Hough. Jacob Laurin of the Mustangs dug the puck out and sent it out to the top of the right circle where Rhett Rampinelli skated into it and buried a shot from 20 feet out up over Hough's glove.

Alexander Westin's goal midway through the second period put Idaho back out in front, then Mason Vaughn's tally with 0:18 left in the period gave the IceCats a two-goal lead.

The teams traded goals later in the period, making it 4-2 Idaho, and Ogden out-shot Idaho, 7-6, in a scoreless third period.

Saturday's game was a thriller.

Jackson York took a shot from the point that was stopped, but Alexander Westin banged home the rebound to put Idaho up, 2-1, at the 8:53 mark of the second period.

With 4:11 left in the period Rei Kikuchi took a precise pass from York that went from blue line to blue line, splitting the Ogden defensemen, and sent him in alone on a breakaway. He made a quick deke to his left then went back to his forehand to bury it and make it 3-1 Idaho.

Idaho squandered a three-goal lead in Saturday's game, but recovered for a 5-4 win. Tristan Phillips scored 4:47 into the third period to put the IceCats up, 4-1, but Ogden

did not go that easily. The Mustangs scored three times in a span of 2:43 to tie the game up with just under eight minutes left in the third period.

Matus Spodniak, the WSHL's leading scorer, figured in all four Ogden goals (2-2-4). The two he scored himself were his 65th and 66th of the season, giving him one more than Fresno's Mannon.

Spodniak's second goal of the night, which tied the game 4-4, was a tremendous individual effort with Ogden skating four-on-three. Skating down the left wing puck directly at two Idaho defenders in the left circle and split them with a toe-drag move before sliding it past Hough to tie the game.

That still left plenty of time on the clock for the Mustangs, but Idaho's Hough (28 saves) held the fort the rest of the way. It was Idaho's Matthew Kindred's second of the game with 6:14 left that decided the game.

With the faceoff in the right-wing circle, the left-shot Kindred used his right skate to drag the puck forward, collected and moved it to his forehand for a quick shot that beat Ogden's Tymen Edelkoort III to the stick side.

A tripping call against the Mustangs with 50 seconds left – just as they were pulling Edelkoort for the extra attacker – cut short Ogden's effort to get the equalizer.

The Mustangs picked up two vital points in the standings in Sunday's game, which was played at Boise's CenturyLink Arena – the home of the ECHL's Idaho Steelheads. They won a wide-open affair, 7-6, in a shootout.

Just 46 seconds after the opening faceoff, Jacob Laurin made an innocent dump-in from just outside the blue line Idaho. The puck went on net and Hough bobbled it and allowed it to roll across the goal line.

Ogden's Kerry Kruzel added the only other goal of the opening frame and it was 2-0 Mustangs at the first intermission.

Jacob Hedenrona came out and scored just 33 seconds into the second period to get the IceCats on the board, but Spodniak responded with two goals in 29 seconds to put the 'Stangs up, 4-1.

Lance Herning counter-punched for Idaho 45 seconds later and the IceCats kept it going, scoring a total of three goals in 5:15 to tie the game, 4-4.

Spodniak was not done, however, scoring his third goal of the period with 1:43 left to give Ogden the lead back.

The back-and-forth scoring continued in the final frame as two of the WSHL's elite teams put on an entertaining display of junior hockey for the CenturyLink Arena crowd.

At the 4:42 mark, Andreas Otto scored for Idaho to tie the game back up, but just over a minute later Ross Bartlett gave Ogden their third lead of the game.

The IceCats put a total of 22 shots on Edelkoort in the third period and overtime, and Alex Piliya became the sixth Idaho skater to score in the game when he tied the game, 6-6, with just under five minutes left in regulation.

Neither team was able to find the net in the four-on-four or three-on-three overtime periods, so the game went to a shootout. Laurin, the first shooter for the Mustangs, was the only player to convert.

Idaho head coach John Olver turned to Tyler Matthews to start the third period and he stopped 15 of 16 shots in the third period and overtime.

EL PASO RHINOS @ WICHITA JR. THUNDER

Rhinos collect 45 goals, six points, division crown in Wichita

02.16.18 – El Paso 16, Wichita 0

02.17.18 – El Paso 18, Wichita 1

02.18.18 – El Paso 11, Wichita 2

The result of the three-game series between the El Paso Rhinos, the team with the best record in the WSHL, and the Wichita Jr. Thunder, who have just three wins, was not surprising. The Rhinos won all three games in convincing fashion, officially securing the Mid-Western Division title in the process.

There were no hat tricks in El Paso's 16-0 win on Friday night, but Maxiamillan Kamper, Nikita Pintusov, Austin Simpson and Adam Stalzer each scored twice for the Rhinos who scored seven times in the first period and cruised.

Kayden Pickles was between the pipes for El Paso and posted the shutout.

Simpson scored four times and Chaseton Sare (3-2-5) also notched a hat trick in an 18-1 El Paso win on Saturday.

Austin Tilton made 62 saves for Wichita and Braedon Thomas scored for the Jr. Thunder.

A seven-goal second period blew Sunday's game open for the Rhinos and they went on to win, 11-2.

Pintusov and Simpson each scored three goals and Jacob Kranabetter chipped in with a pair.

Hunter Litman and Garrett Ropka scored the Wichita goals.

SAN DIEGO SABERS @ VALENCIA FLYERS

Sabers take three of four points in Valencia

02.16.18 – Valencia 4, San Diego 3 (2 OT)

02.17.18 – San Diego 4, Valencia 3

The San Diego Sabers snapped a 16-game losing streak against the Valencia Flyers over the weekend, losing in double overtime on Friday and winning by the same 4-3 score in regulation on Saturday.

Friday night, in overtime, San Diego was about to clear their zone when Nickolai Gruzdev stripped the puck from the defender and got it over to Jeremy Malm, who hit him with a return pass as he cut to the net. He went up over the glove of San Diego goalie Zach Hale (36 saves) to win it for the Flyers.

Valencia had a 2-0 lead on a pair of goals from Jacob Ulestig, but the Sabers scored the next three goals to go ahead. Daniel Klinecky forced overtime when he scored for the Flyers with 2:59 left in overtime.

Zach Everett (30 saves) posted the win for the Flyers and Biko Neuenschwander (1-2-3) figured in all three San Diego goals.

In Saturday's re-match, Cole Parker gave San Diego their first lead of the game, 3-2, when he scored his second goal of the game 7:12 into the second period.

Valencia's Erik Ehrmantraut scored his second of the game 6:22 into the third period to tie things up, but just 1:22 later Ryan Conover put the Sabers back in front with what proved to be the winning goal.

Hale made 16 of his 44 saves in the third period, keeping the Flyers off the board for the final 12:16 to secure the win.

Mack Willy made 26 saves for Valencia.

BELLINGHAM BLAZERS @ SOUTHERN OREGON SPARTANS

Bellingham makes good use of games in hand, ties Tahoe for second in Northwest

02.16.18 – Bellingham 5, Southern Oregon 1

02.17.18 – Bellingham 5, Southern Oregon 2

02.18.18 – Bellingham 2, Southern Oregon 0

The Bellingham Blazers went on the road to Southern Oregon and came back with all six points, allowing them to pull even with the Tahoe Icemen for second place in the Northwest Division. The Blazers hold a game in hand.

Five different Blazers scored, and Edward Coffey, stopped 32 of 33 shots to backstop Bellingham to a 5-1 win on Friday.

It was a 1-0 game after 20 minutes, but Bellingham scored three times in a span of 3:53 early in the second period to open up a four-goal lead.

On Saturday, Bellingham out-shot Southern Oregon, 11-6, in a scoreless first period. Jamahl Eakett scored 48 seconds into the second period to give the Blazers a lead they that would not surrender.

Bellingham took a 3-1 lead into the third period and Kevin Kubanek scored twice to give the Blazers a commanding four-goal lead.

Joel Holmberg scored both Spartans goals. His second of the game with 1:46 to play accounted for the 5-2 final.

Krystof Holub made 31 saves for the Spartans while Bellingham's Avery Heath turned aside 18 of 20 shots.

Sunday's game was a tight-checking affair with quality goaltending at both ends of the rink. Ruslav Novruzov's goal at 11:54 of the first period was the only goal until Eakett sealed it with an empty-netter in the final minute.

A Southern Oregon player skated the puck out across the Spartans blue line but Ilya Abubakirov stripped him from behind and moved the puck to Novruzov who gave it right back to him, sending him in alone on Spartans netminder Austin Toussaint (26 saves). At the last second, Abubakirov played it back across to Novruzov who buried it.

Kolter Pawlick made 15 of his 30 saves in the second period of the 2-0 shutout win.

UTAH OUTLIERS @ CASPER COYOTES

Outliers grab share of Mountain lead after sweep in Casper

02.16.18 – Utah 8, Casper 0

02.17.18 – Utah 7, Casper 1

02.18.18 – Utah 10, Casper 1

A three-game sweep of the Coyotes in Casper allowed the Utah Outliers to crawl back to the top of the Mountain Division – a spot they share with Odgen.

The Outliers scored four times in the first period Monday and rolled from there to an 8-0 win. Dylan Massie and Kane Toriumi scored two goals apiece and Dawson Rodin made 24 saves for his sixth shutout of the season.

Brandon Krumpschmid (1-3-4) and Alex Crilley each doled out three assists for Utah.

Dylan Ossachuk has been stellar in net for the Coyotes lately, but had a long night in the Casper in this one. He did not stop playing, however, turning aside 15 of 16 shots in the final period.

The Outliers followed up with another convincing win on Saturday, 7-1.

Utah already led, 4-0, early in the third period when Benji Mickel rattled off three straight goals for the Outliers – a natural hat trick.

Casper actually put pressure on the Utah net all night long, registering double-digit shots in each period. Eliot Bergbauer finally put one home and spoiled Rodin's shutout bid with just 30 seconds left on the clock. Rodin made 35 saves in the game, but fell just short of back-to-back shutouts.

Jan Pixa (3-2-5) led the charge with a hat trick in Sunday's 10-1 Utah win. Erik Safstrom (2-2-4) and Jacob Wanstrom (1-3-4) pitched in four points apiece and Cedric Lesieur stopped 27 of 28 shots in his Outliers debut.

Mattias Wikstrom also scored a pair of goal for Utah.

SEATTLE TOTEMS @ ONTARIO AVALANCHE

Avalanche four points out of Western Division lead after sweep of Totems

02.16.18 – Ontario 6, Seattle 2

02.17.18 – Ontario 4, Seattle 2

02.18.18 – Ontario 7, Seattle 5

The Ontario Avalanche took care of business by claiming all six points on the table in their weekend series against the Seattle Totems while Fresno was taking care of Long Beach. The result was the Avs moving from 10 points back of Long Beach to just four.

Ontario used a four-goal first period to propel themselves to a 6-2 win on Friday. William Ma scored the first and last goals of the opening period for the Avalanche – the first coming just 1:16 after the opening faceoff and the second with 0:48 seconds left in the period.

Ma also picked up an assist in the game and Connor Duffy kicked out 33 of 35 shots in the Ontario net.

Caleb Travis scored both Seattle goals in the second period as the Totems cut the four-goal deficit in half, but the Avs out-shot Seattle 18-7 in the third period and added a pair of insurance goals.

The first two times the Avalanche took the lead in Saturday's game, the Totems tie it back up. Cam Gross scored with :17 left in the second period to tie the score, 2-2. The Totems went on the power play with 53 seconds left, giving them a great chance to tie the game up before the intermission and that's exactly what they did.

Michael Shippee made a slick move to gain the zone, then made a cross-ice pass to Gross who fired a shot on goal from just inside the blue line. The puck was deflected high in the air off Duffy's blocker and then came down across the goal line.

Ontario came out and took control of the game in the third period, however, out-shooting Seattle 15-4 and scoring twice.

Alex Bouchard scored the game-winner at 8:06 as a Seattle penalty was about to expire. Jesse Zaharichuk passed the puck from the right point to Bouchard at mid-point and he quickly snapped the puck on net before a defender could close on him. With traffic in front, it eluded Seattle's Naoki Onondera (33 saves) to give Ontario their third lead of the game and third time was the charm for the Avalanche.

Jeremy Van Dyke added an insurance goal at 11:30 left and Duffy kicked out 29 of 31 shots for the Avs.

Seven different Ontario skaters scored in a 7-5 Avalanche win on Sunday.

Gross gave Seattle a 3-1 lead early in the second period with his first of two goals on the night, but Ontario evened it back up before the second intermission.

Declan Curtis scored in the first minute of the third period to give the Avs a 4-3 lead. Gross tied it back up just over a minute later, but Ontario rattled off the next three goals.

Michel Shippee had a goal and three assists for Seattle.

DALLAS SNIPERS @ OKLAHOMA CITY BLAZERS

Blazers post sweep, but can't stop El Paso from clinching division title

02.16.18 – Oklahoma City 12, Dallas 0

02.17.18 – Oklahoma City 8, Dallas 0

02.18.18 – Oklahoma City 6, Dallas 2

The Oklahoma City Blazers posted a convincing sweep of the Dallas Snipers, so they did not lose any ground to first-place El Paso, but the Blazers ran out of track. With seven games remaining they will not be able to catch the Rhinos and will have to settle for a second-place finish in the Mid-Western Division.

The Blazers started slowly, scoring just once in the first period of Friday's game, but erupted for eight goals in the second and went on to win, 12-0.

Griffin Wienceck had a hat trick and Bobby Cloutier notched his fifth shutout of the season.

The Snipers held the Blazers off the board in the first period of Saturday's game despite being out-shot, 19-4. But Manny Legace could not keep the Blazers at bay forever, and they broke loose for four goals in each of the second and third periods for an 8-0 win.

Bobby Cloutier only had to make 10 saves for shutout number six while Legace finished with 45 saves for Dallas.

Joseph Hebert and Vitalii Mikhailov each scored twice for OKC.

A natural hat trick by Mikhailov turned a 1-0 Blazers lead late in the first period into a 4-0 advantage by the middle of the second on Sunday. Victor Ekk assisted on all three of his goals.

Arvidas Domeika and Michael Pistek scored for Dallas and Evan Williams made 39 saves for the Snipers as OKC won by a 6-2 final.

CHEYENNE STAMPEDE @ COLORADO JR. EAGLES

Colorado posts home wins over Cheyenne on Friday, Sunday

02.16.18 – Colorado 13, Cheyenne 0

02.18.18 – Colorado 10, Cheyenne 0

The Colorado Jr. Eagles hosted the Cheyenne Stampede on Friday and Sunday, posting a pair of shutout wins.

Four different Jr. Eagles scored twice in the game on Friday and Will McEwen turned aside all 12 shots he faced in a 13-0 Colorado win.

Dawson Keay scored both of his goal in a six-goal first period for the Jr. Eagles. Eric Hildebrand, Nick Lund and Cory Richardson also scored two goal each.

Robbie Hufnagel entered the Stampede net for the beginning of the second period and made 35 saves over the final 40 minutes.

Braden Lajoie made nine of his 20 saves in the third period to finish off a shutout in a 10-0 Colorado win on Sunday.

Carter Dahl scored two goals, set up another pair, and Keay (1-3-4) also contributed four points. Both of Dahl's goals came in the first period as the Jr. Eagles built a 7-0 lead before the first intermission.

Hufnagel made 50 of his 67 saves through the first two periods.

SUPERIOR ROUGHRIDERS @ COLORADO JR. EAGLES

RoughRiders give Jr. Eagles a run for their money in Ft. Collins

02.17.18 – Colorado 3, Superior 1

The Colorado Jr. Eagles led, 1-0, at the first intermission on an Eric Hildebrand goal, and went on to beat the visiting Superior RoughRiders, 3-1, on Saturday evening.

Superior went on a five-minute power play late in the first period. It carried over into the second, but they were unable to capitalize. They did tie the game, however, at 8:56 of the second period on a Kyle Cagnoni goal. Sean McMahon put Colorado back in front two and a half minutes later, however.

A wraparound goal by Carter Dahl 1:16 into the third period gave the Jr. Eagles some breathing room. That goal closed the scoring as the final 18:43 went by without any more red lights. Colorado out-shot Superior, 12-6, in the final frame.

Superior's Marshall Murphy faced double-digit shots in each period and allowed a single goal in each frame. He made 36 saves on the night.

Will McEwen stopped 16 of 17 shots for the Jr. Eagles.

--- compiled by Scott Harrington/Harrington Sports Media