

WSHL WEEKLY NOTES 03.07.18 – MOUNTAIN DIVISION



Photo provided by: Mark Mauno

CASPER COYOTES (16-35-0, 32 pts)

www.caspercoyotes.com

@CasperCoyotes

Cameron Cross, Bradley Green, and David Pokorny each scored for the Coyotes over the weekend, but the 'Yotes suffered a three-game sweep at the hands of the Mid-Western Division's Oklahoma City Blazers.

Casper finishes the season having shown flashes of brilliance against some of the league's top teams, including the Western States Shootout, where they won two of three games.

Green finishes as the team leader with a 27-21-48 line leading the team in goals and points. Jacob Elik's 7-23-30 line led the team in assists.

Casper boasts eight players with more than 20 points on the year and defenseman Tyler Rossi led the blueline corps with a 5-18-23 line.

Dylan Ossachuk ended the season with a team high seven victories to go with his impressive .887 SV%.

Casper will face off with Superior in the first round of the playoffs, a team they were unable to beat in six tries in the regular season. But, the games were close, especially in a recent four-game series a few weeks ago that saw the Coyotes score 11 goals in the four games.

If Casper can find the consistent energy they've displayed at times this season, they could make for an exciting first round series with the RoughRiders.

CHEYENNE STAMPEDE (2-48-0, 4 pts)

www.cheyennestampe.com

@StampsHockey

The Cheyenne Stampede have been off for the past two weeks and will have one more week of rest before playing in the first round of the playoffs.

Given the way the Mountain Division has gone down this season, with the top end needing all of their 50 games to determine who gets a bye and who gets Cheyenne in round one, the Stampede finally know who they'll be visiting come playoff time.

Cheyenne will travel to Fort Collins to face the Jr. Eagles in a best-of-three Mountain Division Quarterfinal series, and they'll need all the rest they can get against a Colorado team that has been in playoff mode for most of the season.

So, the cards may be stacked against Cheyenne, but they've proven to be a team that refuses to go down easy, making teams earn their last goal no matter how late in the game it is. We expect this Cheyenne team to look to make things very difficult for the Jr. Eagles in the playoffs.

COLORADO EAGLES (32-12-7, 71 pts)

www.coloradojunioreagles.com

@COJrEagles

Colorado has been in the middle of Mountain Division race, sticking with both Ogden and Utah all season with the three teams embroiled in a race to the top. But, with

second place on the line – and the coinciding first round bye – the Jr. Eagles found themselves in a series with the very team they were tied with in the standings.

Alas, the Jr. Eagles were felled by the Mustangs in three tight games that saw both teams display the intense and powerful hockey that has made the Mountain Division the top division in the WSHL.

Will McEwen started Friday, making 38 saves for Colorado followed up with 35 saves on Sunday. Braden LaJoie started Saturday making 31 saves in the first two periods before giving way to McEwen in the third.

LaJoie ends the season with 22 wins and a spectacular 2.31/.920 slash line.

Sean McMahon scored his 18th goal on Friday and Joseph Roach scored his 12th goal of the season to tie Friday's matchup before a last-minute Ogden goal put Colorado in the loss column.

David Mitchell ended the weekend with a 1-2-3 line giving him 49 points. We've applauded the Jr. Eagles' depth and ability to get scoring from the entire roster and they'll end the regular season with Mitchell (16-33-49), Cory Richardson (18-31-49), and Carter Dahl (25-24-49) each ending the season tied for the team lead in points.

Colorado boasts 13 players who have scored 25 points and they added even more depth at the transaction deadline, bringing in Tom Ignatovich (2-6-8 in 12 games with COL), Dawson Keay (5-3-8 in 12 games with COL), and Nick Lund (3-2-5 in 9 games with COL).

The Jr. Eagles will host Cheyenne in the first round of the playoffs and will work to earn the right to knock off Utah or Ogden in the following rounds on their way to the Thorne Cup.

OGDEN MUSTANGS (38-12-1, 77 pts)

www.ogdenmustangs.com

@OgdenMustangs

The Mustangs put to rest the idea of them not getting a bye in the first round of the playoffs by sweeping Colorado over the weekend and earning the second seed in the ultra-competitive Mountain Division.

Eight different Mustangs scored goals against the stout Jr. Eagle defense, and Tymen Edelkoort earned the three victories totaling 79 saves. The three victories gave

Edelkoort 11 wins on the year giving Ogden three goalies with double-digit wins including Shaun Brown who won 10 games while with Idaho this season.

Rhett Rampinelli continued his hot play against the Jr. Eagles scoring a 3-2-5 line this weekend and giving him a 4-4-8 line in six games against their Mountain Division rivals.

Matus Spodniak managed just one assist over the weekend leaving him just shy in his pursuit for the league record for points in a season. The Slovakian ends the year with an impressive 69-77-146 line, just three points short of the league record set in 2006-07. Signed to D-1 American International College for next season, Spodniak finishes his illustrious WSHL career with 135-153-288 totals over 146 games and the league leader in career goals scored.

It has been playoff hockey for the past month plus in the Mountain Division and Ogden just passed a major test to solidify their place among the league's best teams.

There is an excellent chance the Mustangs and Jr. Eagles meet again in the playoffs, and if they do fans can expect another series of strong hockey.

SUPERIOR ROUGHRIDERS (25-25-1, 51 pts)

www.SuperiorRoughRiders.com

@SPR_RoughRiders

Watch out for the RoughRiders.

We've been waiting for this team to blow up – built young and fast with great coaching – we've believed it was a matter of time before they turned a corner and their youth becomes a weapon.

And they may have chosen the right time to make the jump with the playoffs right around the corner for a Superior team that will look to be the surprise of the league.

The RoughRiders earned three of a possible six points against the Mountain Division's number one team Utah. Newcomers David Waterman (7-8-15 in 15 games with SUP) and Wilson McCloy (1-2-3 in 8 games) each scored on Friday and Thore Weyrauch added his 34th goal in the 6-3 opening loss to the Outliers.

As has been the story all season for the RoughRiders, the team refused to go out without a few swings and, after being down 2-0 on Saturday, Nikita Sheberov scored his first goal of the game to get things rolling for Superior.

Defenseman Vladimir Tcykalo scored his sixth of the year to tie the game before Superior found themselves down two goals again at the top of the third period. Sheberov finished the hat trick with two goals in under two minutes to send the game to overtime where Utah eventually potted the game winner.

Goaltender Bronson Sudberry, who returned to Superior at the end of January, made 48 saves in the OT loss.

Weyrauch went 2-2-4 on Sunday including the first goal of the game, giving the RoughRiders their first lead of the weekend, a lead the upstart Superior squad wouldn't relinquish.

Timely goals by Sheberov, Erik Buschmann, and David Waterman along with 33 saves by Marshall Murphy secured the much-needed victory for Superior over one of the league's best teams to end the season on a high note.

Superior is riding high as they head to the playoffs and will likely be the team to make the biggest waves with many teams Thorne Cup plans.

The RoughRiders will host Casper in the first round, a team they finished the regular season with a 6-0-0 record against, outscoring the Coyotes 33-16 in those games.

UTAH OUTLIERS (39-11-1, 79 pts)

www.UtahOutliers.com

@UtahOutliers

Utah are Outliers no more, earning the Mountain Division crown even after a bit of a scare at the hands of division rivals Superior over the weekend.

Utah earned four of possible six points to secure the top spot in the division, fending off reigning Mountain Division champs Ogden who finished the season one game behind the Outliers.

Dawson Rodin made 19 saves in the game one victory on Friday, but took the loss on Sunday after making 15 saves against Superior.

Rodin finishes the season with 22 wins (3rd in the league), a .932 SV% (2nd in the league), and a 1.96 GAA (5th in the league).

Utah's 100 goals against this season is good for second in the league behind El Paso's 63 goals against.

Jacob Wanstrom (24-42-66) and Brandon Krumpshmid (28-38-66) finish the season tied for the team lead in points while defenseman Zack Hoffman (16-49-65) finishes with the team lead in assists.

Utah boasts eight players with more than 45 points and is definitely one of the teams who will make a serious run for the Thorne Cup after beginning their upward trend in the middle of last season.

Last season's disappointing end has been a motivating factor for this Outlier team and winning the Mountain Division title is just the first step in their quest to be the WSHL's top team.

--- *Tyler Whidden for Harrington Sports Media*