

THORNE CUP SEMIFINAL WRAP-UP; April 14, 2018



Photo provided by: Mark Mauno

The El Paso Rhinos will go after their third Thorne Cup championship tomorrow, while the Ogden Mustangs will attempt to capture their first WSHL title, after the Rhinos and Mustangs were victorious in their semifinal contests on Saturday in El Paso's Sierra Providence Events Center.

Ogden 10, Long Beach 3

The Ogden Mustangs scored five times in the second period to break open the game and cruised to a 10-3 win over the Long Beach Bombers in the early semifinal.

The Mustangs scored the lone goal of the first period, but jumped on the Bombers early in the second period, scoring twice in the first 1:51. Matus Spodniak - his first of two goals in the game - and Ammon Anderson quickly made it 3-0 Ogden. That opened the floodgates and the Mustangs were in control from that point forward.

Tomas Urbanec scored a pair of third period goals for Long Beach, but the game was out of reach at that point.

Mustangs netminder Tymen Edelkoort, making his fourth start in as many days, made 14 of his 25 saves in the third period.

Spodniak added a pair of assists for a four-point game and Ian Currie had three assists for Ogden.

El Paso 4, Idaho 0

Twenty four hours earlier they sat with their backs to the wall, but the El Paso Rhinos returned from the brink of elimination with a comeback win over Utah, and are now on their way to the Thorne Cup championship game following a 4-0 win over the Idaho IceCats.

The Rhinos broke the ice just 1:44 after the opening faceoff as Chaseton Sare re-directed a Colby Haugen shot from the point.

The score remained 1-0 until midway through the second period. A Rhinos defenseman retrieved a dump-in deep in the El Paso end of the rink and fired a long clearing attempt through the neutral zone and into the Idaho end. An IceCats defender lost an edge, allowing Nikita Pintusov to get to the puck first. Idaho netminder Tyler Matthews tried to come out to get to the puck first but Pintusov shifted around him and slid the puck into the empty cage.

Pintusov and Jake Kopinski added third-period goals to make the final 4-0 El Paso.

The Rhinos stuck with Kayden Pickles in net after he backstopped the team to their season-saving win over Utah in his tournament debut. He rewarded them with a 19-save shutout.

--- *Scott Harrington/Harrington Sports Media*