

WSHL WEEKLY NOTES 10.10.18 – WESTERN DIVISION



FRESNO MONSTERS (00-00-0, 00 pts)

@WSHLMonsters

www.FresnoMonsters.com

The Fresno Monsters get their 2017-18 season underway this week by hosting the Ontario Avalanche for a three-game series at Selland Arena. The Monsters, who finished third in the division race last season despite having the best goal differential (+109), will play 21 of their 23 home games at the downtown arena this season.

Fresno has four returning defensemen to build their defense around: 20-year-old Logan Domagala, entering his fourth WSHL season and his third with the Monsters, 19-year-olds Taylor Hiatt (a Fresno native) and Ty Wright and Cody Printzen, who was a regular last year at 17.

"Domo was named captain amongst his peers," said Monsters head coach Kevin Kaminski. "He has a lot of experience in the league and we will rely on him a lot to show the young guys the way. He is solid defensively but has great vision and can score and make plays."

Another 20-year-old, Joel Brotzge, is a puck-moving D-man who spent the last three years playing Junior A in Switzerland while 18-year-old Michael Gomez is a Visalia native who played in the Eastern Hockey League last year.

"I think we're pretty solid on 'D' but still looking to pick up another offensive threat," said Monsters head coach Kevin Kaminski. "Joel Brotzge looks good. He does a lot of the little things right, has excellent positional play and good offensive instincts.

Kaminski added that he's "Just excited to get back playing and coaching the game." And can't wait for the puck to drop Thursday night.

LONG BEACH BOMBERS (00-00-0, 00 pts)

@LBBombersHockey

www.JrBombers.org

The Long Beach Bombers captured the regular season title in the Western Division for the second year in a row in 2017-18, finishing 25 games over .500, and winning the divisional playoffs.

At the Thorne Cup Final in El Paso, they advanced to the semifinal round where the Ogden Mustangs ended their season.

Long Beach will bring some key players back but, as with most junior hockey teams, they have to keep replenishing their roster. Bombers general manager and head coach Chris White went back to a familiar source of talent this summer, bringing over six Swedish imports. Players like Ludwig Rosen, Melwin Thorsson and Erik Fagerlin have landed in Long Beach in recent seasons, helping the team to three of their most successful seasons.

Domenic Bosetti is not Swedish, but he is returning to backstop the team again in his final season of junior eligibility. Bosetti has appeared in 78 games for the franchise over the past three seasons, playing in a lot of clutch situations and big games in that span.

42-goal scorer Tomas Urbanec has produced 205 points (89-116-205) in 146 games in a Bombers uniform over the past four years. White would no doubt welcome him back for another season in the WSHL, but he may stick with the Minnesota Wilderness of the NAHL. Getting the talented forward back would certainly be a plus in Long Beach.

The Bombers open their season with a home-and-home encounter with an improved San Diego Sabers team this weekend.

ONTARIO AVALANCHE (00-00-0, 00 pts)

@TmOntAvs

www.OntarioAvalanche.com

The Ontario Avalanche will have a very experienced blueline to lean on this year with three 20-year-old defensemen, plus 19-year-old Quinn Deshler, who already has two seasons with the Avs under his belt.

The 20-year-olds, Joseph Aguirre, Ethan Bock and Justin Davis have all seen action with the Avalanche in the past although Bock's experience consists on a single game during the 2015-16 season. He played for the Boston Jr. Bruins of the USPHL last season and has also played some junior hockey in Canada.

The mature defense corps will be protecting two goalies with WSHL experience, Connor Duffy and Aidan Harding, although Harding's experience amounts to just a four-game stint last year.

The Avalanche will look to take the proverbial "next step" this year. They have increased their point total four seasons in a row, but have exited in the division semifinal round all four years.

Ontario heads to Fresno for a three-game set with the Monsters starting Thursday night.

SAN DIEGO SABERS (1-2-0, 2 pts)

@sdsabershockey

www.SanDiegoSabersHockey.com

The San Diego Sabers are the only Western Division team to see action so far this season, travelling to Medford, OR last weekend and winning one of three games from the Southern Oregon Spartans.

In addition to the win, both of the losses were close, two-goal affairs. It was a positive showing for a franchise that won just five games last year.

The 14 goals the team scored in three games were also a welcome sight. The Sabers scored just 112 goals in 51 regular season games last season (2.20 goals/game).

Three young newcomers accounted for 10 of the 14 goals: Ashton Jones (5), Zakary Hanaford (3) and Tyler Balok (2) – pointing to a productive summer of recruiting. All three players are Michiganders. Jones and Balok are 18, Hanaford just 16.

San Diego has a young roster overall. They only have one 20-year-old forward and one 19-year-old. They have a pair of 20-year-old defenseman, but Tomas Svoboda is the oldest goalie at 18.

The Sabers are right back at it this week with a game in Valencia against the Flyers on Thursday night followed by a home-and-home with the Long Beach Bombers.

VALENCIA FLYERS (00-00-0, 00 pts)

@valenciaflyers

www.ValenciaFlyers.com

The Valencia Flyers learned last season that a quick start is important in the ultra-competitive Western Division.

The team fell behind the top teams by mid-season last year and, as a result, management made the decision to sell off some veterans and key players like Jakob Kranabetter, Dawson Keay and Spencer Kozlowski were shipped out to more serious contenders.

This season, the Flyers have brought players in from other WSHL clubs, including the Tahoe and Phoenix franchises which are not operating this season.

Forward Mitch Webb is an overage veteran who played in Tahoe last year, along with another of the newest Flyers, forward Californian Lucas Demsar, 18.

Another 20-year-old forward, Ashton Richardt played the last two seasons with the Phoenix Knights.

All three goalies on the roster have previous stints in the WSHL, but none have been regulars. New head coach Justin Dyke has to hope that one of G Mack Willy (20), Brooks Dimarino (19) or Tate Martishius (17) emerges as a go-to option.

Notable additions that come from outside the league are defenseman Isaac Carlson, who comes to Valencia from the Shattuck St. Mary's Midget AAA program, and 16-year-old Ukrainian import Mykyta Shulga.

--- Compiled by Scott Harrington for Harrington Sports Media

