

WSHL WEEKLY NOTES 10.12.18 - WESTERN PROVINCES DIVISION



COLD LAKE WINGS (0-0-0, 0 pts)

www.coldlakewings.com

@ColdLakeWings

The Cold Lake Wings will benefit from having a former NHL player behind their bench during their inaugural season. Former Boston Bruins and Chicago Blackhawks defenseman Johnathan Aitken is the team's general manager and head coach and is eager to get the season underway.

"It will be a challenge, because it's a new team, it's starting from scratch." Aitken told *Bonnyville Nouvelle*. "I think my idea and my mindset is to have a full major junior type feel to the dressing room, the team, and the expectation."

One of the players Aitken has recruited is 6'3", 190-pound defenseman Pavel Simek who was developed in the Czech Republic but got his feet wet in the North American game last year with a stint in the USPHL.

"Pavel has an excellent skill set for a defenceman and is a dangerous offensive threat. At 6-foot-3, 190 lbs, he certainly has the size to be successful in this league," said Aitken.

The most recent additions to the roster were a trio of Canadian-born forwards, Nico Cirelli, Conor Frith and Ilias Okemow.

Frith, who led the Sherwood Park Senators Midget AA team with 28 points in 27 games last season, picked up five points in his first two games with the Wings.

The Wings take off this weekend with games at Hinton and Meadow Lake.

EDSON AEROS (0-0-0, 0 pts)

www.aeroshockey.ca

@AerosEdson

One of the first announcements made by Edson Aeros team president and general manager Axel Axmann was the hiring of Bernie Lynch as head coach. Lynch helped the Smith Falls Settlers of the CPJHL to a 40-4 record last year as an assistant coach, and has a vast amount of experience coaching hockey at national and international levels.

Lynch will be tasked with helping the Aeros lay a solid foundation for a culture of growth, learning and community involvement as they begin their inaugural season in the WSHL.

He has also worked at a multitude of elite national camps and clinics throughout Europe and North America. Bernie has coached in the Czech Republic, Denmark, France, Norway, and Sweden as well as a United States college.

The Aeros roster is made up mostly by Canadian players, but they did bring over seven imports, including five 19-year-old Swedes.

The Edson Aeros drop the puck on their inaugural season this weekend by hosting their new rivals, the Cold Lake Wings and Meadow Lake Mustangs.

HINTON WILDCATS (0-0-0, 0 pts)

www.hintonwildcats.ca

@HintonWildcats

The Hinton Wildcats added to the professional experience in the league's coaching ranks when they hired Geoff Walker to be the team's first general manager and head coach. The Charlottetown, PEI native has taken the reins of the Wildcats and has accepted the challenge of building a junior hockey team from the ground up.

"Geoff had the opportunity to travel to Europe to continue to play at a highly competitive professional level but opted instead to make the transition into the GM/head coach role," said team president Axel Axmann. "Signing Geoff was an important goal for us as he has experience as a player/coach and is well equipped to take on a managerial role. We're very excited that he will be part of the Wildcats franchise and inaugural season."

Walker's professional career includes 300 American Hockey League (AHL) games, 200 East Coast Hockey League (ECHL) games as well as time in Europe (Germany/England/Italy). He has also coached a number of elite hockey teams. His junior career was with the Summerside Western Capitals and major junior with Gatineau Olympique and PEI Rocket.

The Wildcats start off at home this weekend with games against Meadow Lake and Cold Lake.

MEADOW LAKE MUSTANGS (0-0-0, 0 pts)

www.meadowlakemustangs.com

@ML_Mustangs

The Meadow Lake Mustangs play their first two regular season games on the road this weekend, visiting Hinton Friday night and Edson on Saturday.

The Mustangs were shut out in their first two exhibition games, but scored four times in their final pre-season tilt, despite dropping the game to Cold Lake by an 8-4 count.

Team Co-owner Brad Huziak said things are coming along well with the new team's development.

"Ultimately, we want to have a competitive team," Huziak told Meadow Lake Now. "The buzz in the community is very positive. Everybody seems quite excited about it. For Meadow Lake, it's a great hockey community, and this will be a very good calibre."

--- Compiled by Scott Harrington for Harrington Sports Media