

WSHL WEEKLY NOTES 10.19.18 - NORTHWEST DIVISION



BELLINGHAM BLAZERS (4-1-0, 12 pts.)

A convincing three-game sweep of West Sound has given the Bellingham Blazers an early lead in the Northwest Division standings.

The Blazers outscored the Admirals by a 17-4 margin over the weekend, with the lone competitive game being a 2-1 victory in the final game of the series.

"I thought it was a positive weekend overall for bring the first three-game weekend of the season," said Blazers Head Coach and General Manager Mark Collins. "Friday and Saturday, we played well in all areas and on Sunday we faltered, but were able to hold on for the win.

"We didn't have our best on Sunday, yet the team came together and made the necessary sacrifices to win."

Up next, Bellingham will take on cross-state rival Seattle in a home-and-home series on Friday and Saturday. It will be a matchup of the top two clubs in the division at the moment.

"I don't really put any emphasis on a rivalry with Seattle," Collins said. "They are our closest travel team to play, so we end up playing them more than others. We work hard to focus on what we do as a team to improve every day."

Veteran forward Timothy Prexler (7-7-14) has led the way for the Blazers with a 7-7-14 line over his first four game. He is closely followed by Veaceslav Pinin (2-9-11) and Robbie Eichelberger (3-7-10).

SEATTLE TOTEMS (3-1-0, 9 pts)

With wins in three of their first four contests, the Seattle Totems are off to the strong start they were looking for. The Totems won a couple of competitive games last week in a hostile environment in Southern Oregon.

The close matchup points towards more parity than ever within the Northwest Division. It seems that this year, any team can beat anyone on any given night.

Goaltender Wyatt Monear came up big for the Totems, posting a .953 save percentage over the two games against the Spartans. In the team's 4-2 win over Southern Oregon, the Wasilla, Alaska product stopped 38 of 40 shots.

Seattle may have found a legitimate number one goaltender that it can ride throughout the season. Michael Eastman and Benjamin Colvin have both been solid thus far, but Monear has stood out the most.

Italian forward Gabriel Sbob (4-3-7) has also been an impact player early on. The 6-foot-3, 195-pounder is tied with Michael Shippee (1-6-7) for the team lead in points and has the most goals on the team.

This weekend, Seattle is set to take on Bellingham in a home-and-home series starting on Friday night at Bellingham Sportsplex.

SOUTHERN OREGON SPARTANS (2-3-0, 6 pts.)

The Southern Oregon Spartans suffered a minor setback last weekend when they were swept by Seattle in a brief two-game series.

Both games were decided by two goals, so the Spartans have no reason to be discouraged. They are looking to be a contender in the Northwest Division for the remainder of the season.

Forward Logan Emery has had a hot hand in October, netting four goals and a pair of assists for a total of six points.

Michele Vignoli Sanin, another Italian rookie, currently leads the club with nine points (2-7-9). It's still early, but the Spartans are going to need to find more contributors on the offensive end.

The power play has been a reliable source of offense so far. Southern Oregon is converting at a 16.7% clip, meaning it has scored 33% percent of its goal on the man advantage.

This weekend, the Spartans are set to welcome West Sound to Southern Oregon Ice for a three-game set. The series will mark the conclusion of Southern Oregon's season-opening eight-game homestand.

WEST SOUND ADMIRALS (0-3-0, 0 pts.)

The West Sound Admirals finally began their season last weekend and were swept by division-leading Bellingham in a three-game series.

After a couple of tough losses in the first couple of games, West Sound played the Blazers tough in the final contest but ultimately came up one goal short, falling by a 2-1 final.

Julius Airikainen is the only Admiral with multiple points through the team's first series. He posted a goal and an assist last weekend.

Goaltender Noah Bird settled things down in West Sound's crease in the third game of the series after the club allowed 15 goals over the first two contests.

Bird took the tough-luck loss in the game, but posted a .944 save percentage after stopping 26 of 28 shots. The Morham, Maine product put up a 3.63/.896 slash line last year with the Cape Cod Islanders of the NA3HL.

This weekend, the Admirals are back in action on the road with three games against Southern Oregon.

---Jared Tennant for Harrington Sports Media