

## WSHL WEEKLY NOTES 10.23.18 – MID-WESTERN DIVISION



### **DALLAS SNIPERS (3-3-0, 8 pts.)**

With a .500 record and in third place in the Mid-Western Division through their first six games, the Dallas Snipers are off to a solid start.

The Snipers recovered from an opening weekend sweep at the hands of El Paso to record three consecutive wins over Cheyenne. The club will now take on the Steamboat Wranglers for the first time in franchise history at home this weekend.

The Wranglers have just two wins in eight games, but they will present a challenge to the Snipers. Steamboat has plenty of talent on its roster, including forwards Tristen Wells (4-3-7) and Tyrell Bourk (1-5-6), who have both gotten off to quick start and lead the team in goals and assists, respectively.

Dallas has a pair of blueliners in Simon Birkehorn and Gasper Konc who have contributed on the offensive end. The duo has combined for a 3-4-7 scoring line over six games and both players are among the club's top six scorers.

After this weekend's series, the Snipers will take a week off before finishing out their six-game homestand next weekend with a three-game series against Northern Colorado.

### **EL PASO RHINOS (3-0-0, 9 pts.)**

The El Paso Rhinos showed why they're once again a bona fide Thorne Cup contender with a season-opening sweep of Dallas, outscoring the Snipers by a 22-3 margin. The team is back in action this weekend with a three-game set against Wichita.

Dallas did not go down without a fight, and as a result the Rhinos have racked up a staggering 110 penalty minutes through their first three contests. That's good for an average of over 36 minutes per game.

El Paso will play its home opener on Friday night. It will mark the first time that Rhinos fans see their team at County Events Center in El Paso since the club's Thorne Cup championship campaign last season.

Last season, the Rhinos thoroughly dominated Wichita in all nine of the matchups between the two teams. Hopefully, an improved and more experienced Wichita squad will pose a better challenge this year.

Forward Jonas Burman (1-6-7) has been setting up teammates quite effectively early on. The Swedish forward leads the Rhinos in assists and points and is one of nine Rhinos averaging at least a point per game.

### **NORTHERN COLORADO EAGLES (2-6-0, 6 pts.)**

The Northern Colorado Eagles had a tough weekend, dropping three straight games to undefeated Oklahoma City to fall four games below .500.

The first two games of the series were intense battles, but OKC emerged victorious in both contests, albeit by narrow margins.

On Friday evening, a second-period goal gave the Blazers a 2-1 advantage that would hold up. Saturday's game saw Oklahoma City use a pair of first-period goals to build an early lead and hang on for a 4-2 victory.

It's no secret that the Eagles are more talented than their 2-6-0 record would indicate. Luckily, it's a long season and nothing is decided in October. Northern Colorado has plenty of time to work out the kinks and get back on track.

Two-year veteran Nikita Sheberov has certainly done his part with a 4-5-9 line over eight appearances. The Eagles are expecting big things out of the 19-year-old Russian forward after he collected 106 points (64-42-106) over 49 games with the Superior RoughRiders last year.

Sheberov is just 5-foot-10, but he is talented enough to overcome his small stature. It wouldn't be a surprise to see him in the mix for the WSHL scoring title later in the year.

### **OKLAHOMA CITY BLAZERS (6-0-0, 18 pts.)**

The undefeated Oklahoma City Blazers seem to be emerging as legitimate contenders to dethrone El Paso in the Mid-Western Division.

The Blazers red-hot start continued last weekend with a sweep of a tough Northern Colorado team. They won a couple of tight games over the Eagles before a posting 6-1 blowout victory on Sunday to cap off the weekend.

With 18 points, OKC is tied for second in the WSHL standings. That's because the Utah Outliers, who also have 18 points, and the league-leading Ogden Mustangs have played nine games apiece compared to six for the Blazers.

Oklahoma City lost a lot of talent in the offseason, but the new recruits and experienced returners have gotten the job done.

Newly-acquired forward Harri Koll, who has played under assistant coach Ty Smith for the last three years, already has eight points (5-3-8) with his new club.

The third-year WSHL veteran has over 100 points in his career and is tied with Tobias Thorner (5-3-8) for second on the team in points.

The Blazers have their work cut out for them this weekend when they visit Utah for a three-game set. The series should be a good measuring stick for both teams to see where they're at early on.

### **WICHITA JR. THUNDER (0-2-1, 1 pt.)**

The Wichita Jr. Thunder lost their first two games in Steamboat last weekend but salvaged a point in a wild 7-6 overtime loss in the final contest of the series.

In the overtime defeat, the game seemed to be headed to a shootout before the Wranglers scored on a rebound as time expired in the extra period. It was a tough

way to lose, but the Jr. Thunder nearly pulled off the win after being out-played over the first two games.

Forwards Sebastian Lind (1-2-3) and Carson Weingartner (2-1-3) were both productive in a series where Wichita struggled offensively overall.

Lind is a rookie playing in North America for the first time while Weingartner is a 2001 birth year who appeared in 15 games last season with the Jr. Thunder.

Weingartner's three points against Steamboat mean he has already matched his point total from all of last season. The Louisiana native is part of a returning corps of players that the Jr. Thunder are counting on to take a big step this year.

Wichita will have a chance to really show if it has improved this weekend with three games on the road against El Paso.

*---Jared Tennant for Harrington Sports Media*