

WSHL WEEKEND WRAP-UP; November 1-4, 2018



El Paso Rhinos @ Long Beach Bombers

It appears that, at least for the time being, we have a new alpha dog at the top of the Western States Hockey League. The three-game series between the reigning Thorne Cup champion El Paso Rhinos and the Long Beach Bombers was a very highly-anticipated match-up and it did not disappoint. Starting with Thursday's overtime tilt, it was a three-day exhibition of junior hockey at its best. In the end, however, the Bombers claimed eight of a possible nine points, making an argument that they are the team to beat this season, not only in the Western Division, but the entire WSHL.

Long Beach 5, El Paso 4 (SO) – Erik Sillerstrom gave the Long Beach Bombers a 4-3 lead with 7:06 left in the third period, then provided the deciding goal in the shootout after the El Paso Rhinos forced overtime.

With the game tied, 3-3, Sillerstrom gloved a clearing pass out of the air, put it down on the ice, skated down the slot and smacked home a backhand to give Long Beach their third lead of the game.

The Bombers had leads 1-0, 3-1 and 4-3, but the Rhinos tied it up each time.

Donald Alchin scored for El Paso with 3:20 left in regulation to force sudden-death. Martin Dubsy skated the puck deep into the left-wing corner, swung behind the net, and found Alchin at the top of the right circle. He fired a shot high stick side past Long Beach netminder Domenic Bosetti.

Bosetti was a huge factor in the game, making 56 saves, and stopping all 26 shots the Rhinos directed at him in the second period.

The Rhinos out-shot the Bombers, 4-2, in a scoreless five-minute OT period and the game progressed to a shootout. Dubsy converted for El Paso while Sillerstrom and Tuan Thanh Hoang beat El Paso goalie Nils Velm, who made 39 saves in the game.

Long Beach 5, El Paso 1 – The Bombers made a statement Friday evening, handing El Paso their most decisive defeat in recent memory. The veteran Bosetti came up huge in the Long Beach net, stopping all 17 shots El Paso sent his way in the third period as they made a furious comeback attempt, and kicking out 46 of 47 shots in all, preserving a 5-1 win.

Sillerstrom continued his big series, scoring 38 seconds into the game to get Long Beach off on the right foot. He added a “dagger” goal in the final minute of the second period that gave the Bombers a 4-1 lead going into the third period.

The Rhinos controlled the puck off the opening faceoff, and had the Bombers pinned in their own zone, but Jakub Kabring blocked a shot and the puck was picked up by Sillerstrom, who skated out and through the neutral zone to create a three-on-two. As he crossed the blue line, he passed the puck to Tomas Urbanec who was along the right-wing boards, and Sillerstrom went hard to the net. Urbanec’s return shot/pass was re-directed by Sillerstrom, giving the Bombers an early lead.

With the assist, Urbanec became the all-time points lead for the Bombers franchise with 235.

Urbanec, who figured in all five Long Beach goals, set up the next Bomber tally as well. Defenseman Maxwell Kahn started the breakout with a sharp first pass out of the Long Beach end. The puck was dumped into the El Paso zone and Sillerstrom got in on the forecheck and moved the puck to Urbanec on the left-wing boards. He fired a pass to Kahn, who had skated all the way up the ice and gotten open between the circles. Kahn’s wrist shot found the net and Long Beach had a 2-0 lead.

Urbanec picked up four assists in the game and scored one himself – finishing off a tick-tack-toe passing play for a power play goal with 2:24 remaining that closed out the scoring and put an exclamation point on the victory for the Bombers.

Maximilian Kamper scored late in the second period for El Paso and Kayden Pickles made 32 saves for the Rhinos.

Long Beach 4, El Paso 1 – Bosetti and the Bombers put an exclamation point on the series with a 4-1 win on Saturday. Sillerstrom and Artem Korolev each scored twice and Bosetti turned in another sterling performance, stopping 41 of 42 shots.

The Rhinos out-shot the Bombers, 18-4, in the first period but Bosetti stopped every shot and the game remained scoreless.

Neither team lit the lamp for the first 25:51. It was not until 4:09 of the second period that Filip Schultz broke the ice and gave El Paso the lead.

El Paso's Jonas Burman hustled down the ice to negate an icing, then got the puck to Dillon Manchester who cut in front of the net and tried to stuff the puck into the net. Schultz helped the puck over the line to put the Rhinos on the board.

About three minutes later, Urbanec weaved around the left El Paso defenseman, then threaded a pass between him and his partner to Sillerstrom who buried a one-timer from in close.

Korolev gave the Bombers the lead, 2-1, with 6:02 left in the period, finishing off a nice two-on-one with Diego Gluck.

The goal that really put the Rhinos back on their heels came 54 seconds into the third period when Korolev struck again to give Long Beach a 3-1 lead. Gluck hit Korolev with a pass as they crossed the El Paso blue line. Korlev took a shot from the top of the right circle that eluded Velm and the Bombers had a two-goal lead.

Gluck and Gennady Malashenko assisted on both Korolev goals.

4:21 after Korolev's second goal, Urbanec put another pass from the right-wing boards on Sillerstrom's tape in the slot, and he made no mistake, giving Long Beach some breathing room.

Final shots on goal were 42-32 in favor of El Paso. Velm made 28 saves for the Rhinos.

Ontario Avalanche @ Valencia Flyers

Valencia 6, Ontario 5 – The Valencia Flyers came back from 3-1 and 4-2 deficits and protected a one-goal lead for the final 15:55 of the game to claim a 6-5 win over the visiting Ontario Avalanche.

Tristan Warr's third goal of the game gave the Flyers their first lead of the contest 4:05 into the third period. Dominik Knap took a long cross-ice pass, skated into the Ontario zone down the right wing and dished a backhand pass between two defenders to Danylo Moroz in the slot. Moroz sent it on to Warr and he ripped a snap shot under the bar.

Moroz had a goal and four assists in the game.

Joseph Aguirre and Jeremy Van Dyke each scored twice for the Avalanche.

Ontario netminder Connor Duffy stopped 15 of 16 shots in the third period, allowing only Warr's game-winner, and finished the game with 41 saves.

Tate Martishius (18 saves) and Brooks DiMarino (20) split the goaltending duties for Valencia.

Wichita Jr. Thunder @ Oklahoma City Blazers

The Oklahoma City Blazers took care of business, sweeping all nine points from their three-game home series against the Wichita Jr. Thunder, and out-scoring their guests 24-4 in the process.

Oklahoma City 6, Wichita 0 – Harri Kroll scored twice and Xavier Garneau posted the shutout as the Oklahoma City Blazers won, 6-0, over the visiting Wichita Jr. Thunder on Friday.

The Blazers fired 35 shots at Wichita netminder Elis Ericson over the first 40 minutes of the game, but he turned away 32 to keep the Jr. Thunder in the game. Kroll and Dominik Sousa scored goals two and a half minutes apart early in the third period, however, to quell and thoughts Wichita had of mounting a comeback.

Ericson, a 20-year-old who began the season playing junior hockey in Sweden, finished the game with an impressive 45 saves in his WSHL debut.

Oklahoma City 8, Wichita 1 – Oklahoma City goaltender Josh Martinez stopped 26 of 27 shots in his WSHL debut to backstop the Blazers to an 8-1 win over the Jr. Thunder Saturday afternoon.

Vitalii Mikhailov (3-2-5), Jordan Sgro (2-3-5) and Dominic Loubert (1-4-5) all had five-point games for OKC. Mikhailov put the finishing touches on his hat trick with a pair of goals 2:21 apart early in the third period that gave the Blazers an 8-0 lead.

Christopher Wracker scored the Wichita goal midway through the third period to ruin Martinez' shutout bid.

Wichita netminder Bronson Sudberry made 23 of his 46 saves in the first period.

Oklahoma City 10, Wichita 3 – Sunday's series finale was in the win column for Oklahoma City early as the Blazers scored five times in the opening period and coasted to a 10-3 win.

Mikhailov notched a hat trick while Stephane Doerring, Dylan Koch and Brad Bowes each scored a pair.

Ericson was back in net for the Jr. Thunder and made another 44 saves.

Braeden Thomas, Erik Back and Carson Weingartner scored for Wichita.

Cheyenne Stampede @ Utah Outliers

Despite the final count, both in terms of games and goals, the Cheyenne Stampede went into Accord Arena and made the Utah Outliers work everything they got for the first two periods Friday and Saturday. That gives head coach Neil Breen and the Stampede something to build on even though the Outliers claimed all nine points.

Utah 6, Cheyenne 0 – Six different players scored goals for the Utah Outliers, and netminder Oscar Wahlgren posted his first shutout of the season, in a 6-0 win over the Cheyenne Stampede Friday night in West Valley City, UT.

Cheyenne goalie Danny Yockey made 50 saves and kept the Stampede in the game for two periods, turning aside 36 of 38 shots through the first 40 minutes, but the Outliers wore the Stampede down and scored four times in the third period.

Kaeden Meuer and Nicholas Ness each had a goal and two assists for Utah.

Utah 5, Cheyenne 1 – In a game that was much closer than the final score indicated, the Stampede stayed with the Outliers through two periods again, but Utah once again buried four goals in the third for a 5-1 win.

Matt Bartel broke the ice at 16:25 of the first period. He crossed the Cheyenne blue line and, using a defenseman as a screen, fired a 50-foot wrist shot just inside the post to the stick side of Stampede goaltender Brendan Carew.

It remained a one-goal game until the Stampede went on the power play late in the second period. Hakan Salt played the puck down to Bryan Watters at the bottom of the right circle and he worked the puck in front where Logan Syrup smacked it in and the two teams went to the locker rooms tied, 1-1, after 40 minutes.

Just 2:22 into the third period, Utah's Dylan Dix kept a puck in at the blue line and played it down to Nicholas Ness, who found Bartel in front, and he buried a quick shot from in close to put Utah back in front.

About three and a half minutes later, the puck went back to Dix at the point off a faceoff, he gave it to Ness, and he fired a pass from against the left-wing boards to Jakub Lelek who had pinched all the way down to the bottom of the right circle. Lelek quickly released a shot that eluded Carew to give the Outliers a 3-1 lead at 5:58.

At 8:46, Alexander Charin banged home the rebound of a long Dix shot and the momentum was heavily slanted in Utah's favor.

Meuer closed out the scoring for Utah with just under five minutes left in the game.

Carew turned in a herculean effort for the Stamps. He made 73 saves on the night, stopping 46 of 47 shots through the first two periods.

Utah 15, Cheyenne 0 – It would appear that the Stampede gave everything they had to give in Saturday's contest as the Outliers scored three goals in the first period, five in the second, and seven in the third for a 15-0 win on Sunday.

Matt Bartel (4-3-7), Jakub Lelik (2-4-6), Nicholas Ness (2-3-5) and Zach Dornseifer (0-5-5) drove the bus for Utah and Jack Walsh posted the shutout.

Fresno Monsters @ Valencia Flyers

Fresno 5, Valencia 3 – Danylo Moroz scored a pair of goals late in the third period to

get the Valencia Flyers within a goal, but Cole Beckman's tally in the final minute of the third period secured a 5-3 win for the Fresno Monsters over the Flyers in Valencia on Friday.

Martin Dlugolinsky and Stanislav Danaev each scored their second goal of the game in the final two minutes of the second period as the Monsters opened up a 4-1 lead.

Fresno maintained their three-goal lead late into the third period. Moroz scored his first at the 15:44 mark, and added another with just 1:22 left, to make things interesting for the fans in Valencia, but the Flyers were unable to get the equalizer.

Veteran Tyler Mathews made 28 saves in the Fresno net for the win. His counterpart, Mack Willy of Valencia, made 22 stops.

Mathews, who has had previous stints in the WSHL with Salt Lake City and Idaho, began the season with the Maryland Black Bears of the NAHL.

Bellingham Blazers @ West Sound Admirals

The Bellingham Blazers won both ends of a split two-game series, topping the West Sound Admirals on Friday and Sunday.

Bellingham 7, West Sound 3 – Jamahl Eackett scored three goals, including the game-winner, as the Bellingham Blazers went into Bremerton and defeated the West Sound Admirals, 7-3, on Friday.

The Blazers out-shot the Admirals, 12-6, in the first period but the game remained scoreless as the two teams returned to their locker rooms for the first intermission.

Bellingham came out and scored three times in the first 2:27 of the second period, however, to bust the game open and chase West Sound started Noah Bird, who had played so well in the first 20 minutes.

Thomas Steven scored 36 seconds after the faceoff to open the period. Eackett followed at 1:45 and Robbie Eichelberger lit the lamp just 42 seconds later to put the Ads back on their heels.

Avery Heath made 22 saves for the Blazers.

Bellingham 6, West Sound 3 – The Blazers returned to Bremerton on Sunday and scored four times in the second period, building a 5-1 lead, on their way to a 6-3 win over the Admirals.

Robbie Eichelberger scored two goals 2:01 apart to give Bellingham a 3-0 lead.

With the Blazers on the power play, Thomas Steven dropped the puck for Eichelberger as he entered the West Sound zone. The left-hand shot skated down the right wing, cut to the middle of the right circle, and fired home a wrist shot to make it 2-0 Bellingham.

Just over two minutes later, Eichelberger drove the net without the puck on a two-on-one with Steven, who waited until the last possible instant before firing a pass right on his tape for the tap-in.

Steven had a goal and three assist and Edward Coffey made 20 saves for Bellingham.

Alex Olsson made 37 saves for the Admirals, stopping 16 of 17 shots in the first period.

Steamboat Wranglers @ Ogden Mustangs

The Steamboat Wranglers went up against the undefeated Mountain Division leaders, the Ogden Mustangs, and put in a good showing despite not picking up any points in the standings. The Mustangs picked up three more wins, and lead the entire WSHL with 45 points.

Ogden 5, Steamboat 1 – Steamboat Wranglers goaltender Jordan Belley turned in a 64-save performance to keep his team in the game, but the Ogden Mustangs eventually wore them down with goals from five different players in a 5-1 home win.

The Ice Sheet in Ogden can be an intimidating place to play, and Ammon Anderson scored for the Mustangs 37 seconds into the game, but the Wranglers kept their heads and only trailed by a goal after the first period.

With the Wranglers down 2-0 in the second period, Steamboat's Richard Kaye found the net on the power play to get the visitors on the board. Although he did not pick up an assist on the play, Dalton Eagles Bear carried the puck right up the gut and got a shot on goal. Jeremy Landers, Jr. swatted it back to Kaye at the point as he was checked, and Kaye fired the puck through traffic and into the net.

Ogden's Artur Ogandzhanyan stopped 19 of 20 shots in the game, allowing just Kaye's power play marker. Belley stopped 28 of 29 shots in the third period alone to prevent the Mustangs from pulling away.

Ogden 5, Steamboat 2 – Ogden out-shot Steamboat by a wide margin in every period, but the Wranglers hung around for most of the game thanks to a 69-save performance from Ian Young, before the Mustangs ultimately prevailed, 5-2.

Ogden led, 2-0, but the Wranglers cashed in on a power play to get on the board 46 seconds into the second period. Andrew Demorat carried the puck from inside the Steamboat blue line up through the middle of the neutral zone, then cut right through the tight grouping of all four Ogden penalty killers at the offensive blue line. He continued right down the slot and beat Ogden goalie Owen Zdunski with a nice backhand shot upstairs.

Later in the period, with Ogden now up, 3-1, some mis-communication between Zdunski (22 saves) and one of his defensemen left the puck sitting unattended behind the Ogden goal. Jeremy Landers, Jr. swept in, circled the net quickly, and stuffed the puck in on his backhand to make it a one-goal game.

The Mustangs restored their two-goal lead exactly a minute later as Steamboat made a miscue of their own behind their net and Lukas Vacin capitalized on it, moving to the front for a quick shot that Young stopped, but cashing in on his own rebound.

Vacin also had three assists in the game. Ian Currie had two goals, including the game-winner, and an assist for Ogden.

Ogden 7, Steamboat 2 – The Wranglers hung in there deep into the game again on Sunday, staying within two goals of the Mustangs until Ogden scored two goals :09 apart to open up a 6-2 lead. They added another goal late for a 7-2 win.

Seven different players found the net for Ogden including Bryson Bartell, who notched the game-winner, and Harry Gulliver and Ryan Mascali, who also contributed a pair of assists each.

A key point in the game came late in the second period with Ogden clinging to a 2-1 lead. Belley tried to cover up a bouncing puck, and it appeared he had it frozen, but Bartell got a stick on it and popped it into the net with 1:36 left in the period to give the Mustangs a 3-1 lead which they took to the locker room for the second intermission.

Belly made a few diving stops in the waning seconds of the period to keep Ogden from taking more breathing room. He logged 20 or more saves in all three periods, making 62 in all.

Tristen Wells and Sebastian Culver scored the Steamboat goals.

Ontario Avalanche @ San Diego Sabers

The San Diego Sabers and Ontario Avalanche played Friday and Sunday and split the two games, but the Avalanche claimed four of six points thanks to Friday's content going to overtime.

San Diego 5, Ontario 4 (OT) – The Ontario Avalanche rallied from a 4-1 deficit on the road to force overtime, but the San Diego Sabers prevailed, 5-4, on a Chance McCardle goal sudden-death overtime Friday night at Iceplex Escondido.

Ontario arrived in town with an opportunity to pass the Sabers in the Western Division standings with a regulation win, but San Diego posted their second impressive home win in as many weekends to solidify their third-place standing in the division.

Midway through the period, with the Avalanche trailing by a goal and on the power play, Kyle Barrett carried the puck into the San Diego zone and made a shark-like circle down the right wing, behind the Sabers net, and back up the left-wing boards where he dropped the puck to Dylan Hadfield. Hadfield returned it to Barrett as he drifted to the right point, and he fired a pass across the zone along the ice to the far post where Nicholas Abernathy re-directed it into the net, tying the game.

Almost three minutes into the five-minute overtime period, the Sabers broke up a one-on-one play in front of their own net. McCardle picked the puck up and skated all the way to the top of the left circle in the Ontario end. He took a low shot along the ice that Avs netminder Connor Duffy stopped, but McCardle followed up his shot beautifully, charging to the net and knocking the rebound past Duffy for the winner.

Duffy entered the game at the start of the second period and stopped all 20 shots he saw over two period, plus another six in overtime, before McCardle's final shot eluded him – a tough "L" to have on your record for sure.

Aleksei Vereshchagin went the distance for San Diego, making 43 saves. He stopped 13 of 14 shots in the first period as the Sabers built their lead.

The Avs broke the ice on a Liam Massie goal less than five minutes into the game, but the Sabers scored four times in the opening period. Samuel Kapusta and Isaiah Frankel scored at 18:42 and 18:57 to give the Sabers a lift – and a three-goal lead – going into the locker room.

Ontario out-shot San Diego, 18-8, in the second period and cut the lead to a single goal.

Ontario 6, San Diego 2 – The Avalanche took Saturday off as San Diego hosted Valencia, then returned to the ice in San Diego on Sunday, picking up three points with a 6-2 win over the Sabers who were playing their third game in three days.

The Sabers scored 44 seconds into the game, but Ontario kept their cool and scored the next three goals. Ontario took a 3-2 lead into the third period after a scoreless second in which shots were even, 10-10.

Six different players in all found the net for the Avs, including Nicholas Abernathy, who tallied the game-winner with :36 left in the second period.

Kurt Yano, with 31 saves on 33 shots, picked up the win for Ontario.

Ian Wigton made 32 saves while Jere Jaakkola and Jakub Vesely tickled the twine for the Sabers.

Meadow Lake Mustangs @ Hinton Wildcats

Hinton 4, Meadow Lake 2 – The Hinton Wildcats built leads of 2-0 and 3-1 in the first period, and held on for a 4-2 win over the Meadow Lake Mustangs Friday evening at the Murray Rec Center in Hinton.

Jakob Arsenault scored two goals, including the game-winner, for the Wildcats. With 7:26 left in the first period, Ryoto Inukai won a draw in the Meadiow Lake zone. The puck went back to Dawson Basnett at the point and he fired a hard, low slap shot that created a rebound. Arsenault reached out to coral the puck, spun, and fired a low shot inside the far post to give Hinton a 3-1 lead. It was his second goal of the period.

Hinton netminder Samuel Gendron made 30 saves, stopping 18 of 19 shots over the final two periods to stymie Meadow Lake as they pressed to come back.

Justyn Noltcho-Clarke scored both Mustangs goals.

Cold Lake Wings @ Edson Aeros

Edson 16, Cold Lake 2 – The Edson Aeros jumped out to a 5-0 lead in the first period and never looked back in a 16-2 win over the Cold Lake Wings.

Emil Johansson and Nathan Gottselig each scored four goals for the Aeros, who also got hat tricks from Sebastian Heden and Coleman Mueller.

Nigel Cardinal scored both Wings goals.

Cold Lake Wings @ Hinton Wildcats

Hinton Wildcats 3, Cold Lake Wings 2 – Brandan Auger scored twice as the Hinton Wildcats built a 3-1 lead, then protected a one-goal lead for the final 28:55 for a 3-2 win over the Cold Lake Wings.

With the Wings trailing, 3-1, midway through the second period, Ty Deleeuw took a long wrister that Justin Dupuis (18 saves) got his glove on, but could not hold onto. The puck landed out in front of the Hinton crease and Conor Frith crashed the net and deposited the rebound to get Cold Lake within a goal.

The Wings were given a power play late in the second period but were unable to convert. Dupuis made a big glove save on Cold Lake scoring leader Anson Smith from point blank right in the middle of the slot with :11 left in the period. Hinton out-shot Cold Lake, 15-6, in a scoreless third period.

Auger opened the scoring at the 8:58 mark of the first period with the Wildcats playing shorthanded. Hinton broke up the Cold Lake zone entry at the blue line and Noah Kwasny fired the puck through the neutral zone to Auger who broke in alone and converted a forehand-backhand move on Maximilian Gaudet of Cold Lake.

Gaudet kept the Wings in the game with 42 saves.

Meadow Lake Mustangs @ Edson Aeros

Edson Aeros 15, Meadow Lake Mustangs 0 – Sebastian Heden (4-1-5) and Nathan Gottselig (1-6-7) led the way offensively and Ethan Brewer made 16 saves to post the shutout in a 15-0 romp for the Edson Aeros over the Meadow Lake Mustangs.

Seattle Totems @ Bellingham Blazers

Seattle 6, Bellingham 4 – The Seattle Totems let a 4-1 lead slip away, but scored twice in the final 1:23 to pull out a 6-4 win over the Blazers in Bellingham.

Late in the third period, with the score tied 4-4 and the faceoff in the Seattle zone, Gabriel Sbob helped out his center Michael Shippee on the draw and bumped the loose puck up to Dominik Cach. Cach skated all the way to the top of the right circle in the Bellingham end where he fired a wrist shot over Kolter Pawlick's glove for the winning goal and to complete a hat trick.

The Totems held a 4-1 lead in the second period, but Jamahl Eackett completed the Bellingham comeback with 5:08 left in the third. Eackett took a pin-point feed from Robbie Eichelberger as he crossed the Seattle blue line, broke in all alone on Seattle's Michael Eastman (26 saves) and buried his shot to tie the game.

Shippee, who also had four assists in the game, added an empty-netter in the final minute.

Sbob matched Shippee's scoring line of one goal and four assists.

Valencia Flyers @ San Diego Sabers

San Diego 4, Valencia 3 – The San Diego Sabers picked up their third home win over three different division opponents in two weeks with a 4-3 win over the Valencia Flyers on Saturday. Karel Kankovsky scored twice and Aleksei Vereshchagin made 34 saves to lead the Sabers to victory.

At the 4:20 mark of the first period the Flyers broke into the San Diego zone and Tristan Warr made a drop pass to Danylo Moroz and he wired a wrist shot high glove on San Diego's Aleksei Vereshchagin from between the circles to break the ice.

The Sabers tied it up before the end of the period on a Taylor Balok goal. Balok picked off a Valencia clearing attempt and passed the puck down to David Grindstaff to the left of Valencia goalie Kamil Paciga. Grindstaff's initial shot was stuffed, but Balok found the rebound as he crashed the net and slid it into the net to tie the game.

San Diego took control of the game with three unanswered goals in the second period. Kankovsky supplied the go-ahead goal at 5:36, then made it 3-1 San Diego with his second tally of the game at 14:20.

Chance McCardle's goal with 2:36 left in the second made it 4-1 Sabers and ended up being the game-winner after the Flyers scored twice in the third.

Dominik Knap scored with a minute left, but the clock ran out on the Flyers.

Vereshchagin turned in another big game for San Diego, making 34 saves.

--- Compiled by Scott Harrington for Harrington Sports Media