

WSHL WEEKLY NOTES 11.02.18 – PROVINCIAL DIVISION



COLD LAKE WINGS (3-3-0, 8 pts)

www.coldlakewings.com

@ColdLakeWings

The Cold Lake Wings have posted a .500 record through the first three weeks of the regular season, playing some tight games, but none tighter than Friday night when Dorian Hall scored 17 seconds into overtime to give the Cold Lake Wings a thrilling 7-6 sudden-death win over the Hinton Wildcats.

The Wings have out-scored their opposition, 24-20, at even strength through their first six games.

The WSHL prides itself on providing exposure to college scouts for their players and Ilias Okemow looks like he might be a player that gets some attention at the Western States Showcase in December. Okemow, 18, is a 6'3", 190-pound forward from Spruce Grove, Alberta who split his rookie season of junior hockey between his hometown Spruce Grove Regals and the Kalkaska Rhinos of the USPHL last season.

Back in Alberta with the Wings, Okemow has produced at a two-points-per-game clip with 10 points (3-7-10) in five games played.

16-year-old Conor Frith, a 5'7" sparkplug, has equaled Okemow's team-leading seven assists.

Cold Lake is on the road this weekend, playing at Edson on Friday and Hinton Saturday.

EDSON AEROS (5-0-1, 16 pts)

www.aeroshockey.ca

@AerosEdson

The Cold Lake Wings and Meadow Lake Mustangs roll through Edson this weekend to face the Edson Aeros in a pair of intra-divisional games.

The Aeros faced the same two teams on the road last weekend. After winning big in Meadow Lake on Friday, Edson doubled up the Wings in Cold Lake on Saturday.

Sebastian Heden scored three goals, including the game-winner, as the Aeros broke open a tie game in the third period for a 6-3 win over the Wings.

Heden completed his hat trick later in the period to put the game away for Liam Austin (23 saves) and the Aeros.

With the pair of road wins, the Aeros solidified their position at the top of the Western States Hockey League's Provincial Division. Edson enters the weekend without a loss in regulation.

After playing just six games, Heden is second in the entire 23-team WSHL with 22 points (10-12-22).

Austin has been sharp between the pipes, winning all four of his starts with an impressive .912 save percentage and a stingy 2.50 goals-against average.

"Liam's been good," said Edson head coach Bernie Lynch. "I've played him more lately to get him in a groove before the American teams show up."

Austin has been between the pipes for five of Edson's first six games.

“Over the course of the season I'll spread the load out.” Lynch said referring to his goalie rotation, which also includes Brayden Gurkovits, a 2000-born Valleyview, Alberta native. 6'3” 14-year-old Ethan Brewer is also on the roster, but has not seen any game action.

The four Provincial Division teams have only played amongst themselves so far this season, but have Northwest Division teams crossing the border the next two weekends for some inter-divisional competition.

“We are looking forward to the American teams coming to play us,” Lynch said. “We don't get better as a group unless we are challenged to play to our best and we know this is going to happen.”

HINTON WILDCATS (3-2-1, 9 pts)

www.hintonwildcats.ca

@HintonWildcats

The Hinton Wildcats welcome the Meadow Lake Mustangs and Cold Lake Wings to Murray Rec Center this weekend as the Wildcats kick off a 10-game homestand.

Last weekend, Hinton earned four of a possible six points with an overtime loss and a regulation win. Hinton held a 3-0 lead in the first period Friday night against Cold Lake, but ended up losing, 7-6, in overtime.

Dmitri Buttazzoni scored a pair of goals for Hinton and Kyle Franceschini made 28 saves for the Wildcats.

Wildcats head coach Geoff Walker pointed out that his team has gotten up early both times they have played Cold Lake only to let them back in the game.

“It happened both times against Cold Lake,” Walker said. “We need to have that killer instinct. You get up 3-0 it should be smooth sailing, but we let them hang around and it killed us in both games.”

“I feel like we should have won both of those games and the standings would certainly look a lot different had we finished those off,” Walker continued. “But we didn't, so that will be our sole focus this weekend – getting the lead and finishing these games off.”

Walker did see some positives despite not getting the win.

“One thing I did like about that third period was we went down two or three times and worked our way back to get at least a point,” Walker said. “I’m proud of my boys for that.”

Buttazzoni and Brendan Auger each scored hat tricks to lead the Wildcats to a 9-5 win at Meadow Lake on Saturday.

Auger’s first goal of the game, 2:25 into the second period, gave Hinton a 2-1 lead, and they took control of the game with three goals in a span of 2:18 later in the period. The Mustangs had sustained pressure on Hinton goalie Justin Dupuis all night, but he came through with 45 saves for the Wildcats, stopping 30 of 32 shots through the first two periods.

Walker has been happy with the contributions of Buttazzoni at both ends of the rink.

“He’s probably our best defensive forward as well,” he said. “So when you combine that with his offensive production he is going to open some doors up for himself. We need to remember he’s only 17, too.”

The Wildcats have played exclusively within the Provincial Division so far this season, but that will change when the West Sound Admirals (Friday & Sunday) and Seattle Totems (Saturday) of the WSHL’s Northwest Division come to town.

Walker says the local fan base has liked what they have seen of WSHL hockey so far.

“The reaction has been great, you know,” he said. “It’s a good fast-paced style of hockey and will only continue to grow.”

MEADOW LAKE MUSTANGS (1-5-0, 3 pts)

www.meadowlakemustangs.com

@ML_Mustangs

Six games into the season Joseph Iron, Justyn Noltcho-Clarke and Zach Pederson share the goal-scoring lead for the Meadow Lake Mustangs with three apiece.

While 19-year-old Justyn is filling the scoresheet (he also has three assists to tie Iron for the team lead there as well), 16-year-old Levi Noltcho-Clarke is filling the scoresheet in another way.

Levi leads the Mustangs with 33 penalty minutes.

Meadow Lake hits the road this weekend, playing in Hinton Friday night and Edson on Saturday.

The Mustangs will then enjoy a six-game homestand where they will play the Southern Oregon Spartans, Bellingham Blazers, West Sound Admirals and Seattle Totems.

--- Compiled by Scott Harrington for Harrington Sports Media