

## WSHL WEEKLY NOTES 11.09.18 – NORTHWESTERN



### **BELLINGHAM BLAZERS (9-3-0-0, 27 pts.)**

The Bellingham Blazers fell to second-place Seattle last Saturday evening, but a pair of wins over West Sound has allowed the Blazers to maintain control of the top spot in the Northwest.

The Blazers took down the Admirals by scores of 7-3 and 6-3 and have now won their first seven matchups against West Sound. Their dominance over the Ads has propelled them into first place, with seven of nine Bellingham victories coming against West Sound.

Early on, it seems that the Blazers' core group of veterans are carrying the team to wins. Robbie Eichelberger (9-20-29), Thomas Steven (18-7-25), and Timothy Prexler (10-13-23) are all averaging nearly two points per contest.

Steven's 18 goals lead the entire WSHL, and both Steven and Eichelberger are in the top five in the league in terms of points.

Furthermore, the contributions of forwards Jamahl Eackett (9-9-18) and Christoffer Fogelberg (7-11-18) cannot be understated.

Bellingham's depth has shined this season, with eight players already notching double-digit points. They've received contributions from players up-and-down the lineup, and it's a huge part of their success up to this point.

It's going to be an interesting week for Northwest Division teams. All four Northwest clubs will take on the four Provincial Division teams in six games over the next week, beginning on Saturday. Bellingham's road trip will begin at Imperial Oil Place as the Blazers take on the Cold Lake Wings.

### **SEATTLE TOTEMS (7-3-1-0, 23 pts)**

The Seattle Totems only played one game last weekend, but they made the most of it. The Totes beat Bellingham 6-4 to crawl to within four points of the Northwest Division leaders.

In the win, the Totems seemed to be in trouble when the Blazers rallied from a 4-1 deficit to tie the game late. But a pair of goal within the final 1:23 gave Seattle an important win.

Dominik Cach, who had a hat trick in the game, scored the game-winning goal with a wrist shot from the right circle over the glove of Bellingham netminder Kolter Pawlick.

Forwards Michael Shippee (6-16-22) and Gabriel Sbop (8-12-20) have already combined for 42 points already. The dynamic duo has terrorized opposing goaltenders early on.

The Totems' trip through the Provincial Division will kick off this Saturday at Repsol Place against the Edson Aeros before coming to a conclusion next Saturday against the Meadow Lake Mustangs.

### **SOUTHERN OREGON SPARTANS (3-7-1-0, 10 pts.)**

A rocky start has put the third-place Southern Oregon Spartans 13 points behind the next closest team in the Northwest, Seattle.

The Spartans were swept by the Totems in their most recent series, losing a pair of regulation contests before dropping the finale in overtime.

Looking ahead, things won't get much easier for the Spartans in the foreseeable future. After taking on the four Provincial Division teams over the course of the next week, Southern Oregon will close out the first half with series against Bellingham, the Fresno Monsters, and Seattle.

Bellingham and Seattle represent the top two teams in the Northwest while Fresno is currently in second place in the Western Division.

Improving discipline could be key to a quick Southern Oregon turnaround. The Spartans lead the Northwest with 315 PIMs, but they are killing off only 76 percent of their opponent's power plays.

Southern Oregon has spent the seventh-most time on the penalty kill of any WSHL team, which has probably factored into their struggles on the kill.

The Spartans are taking on the Meadow Lake Mustangs on the road this Saturday before closing out their six-game road trip against the Edson Aeros the following weekend.

#### **WEST SOUND ADMIRALS (3-8-0-0, 9 pts.)**

The West Sound Admirals have yet to figure out Bellingham. The Ads have dropped each of their first seven contests against the Blazers, which is why they currently sit at five games below .500.

West Sound was out-scored by a 13-6 margin against the Blazers in a two-game set last weekend and has lost four of its last five games. The stretch has caused the Admirals to lose some of the momentum they gained from taking two of three against Southern Oregon in mid-October.

The Ads' road trip through the province of Alberta will see them take on the Hinton Wildcats and Meadow Lake Mustangs two times each and includes one-game matchups against the Edson Aeros and Cold Lake Wings.

Forwards Oliwer Stensson and Alec Johnson own identical 3-8-11 scoring lines to pace West Sound. Vladislav Polyshov (6-4-10) and newly-acquired Caleb Travis (4-5-9) are both close behind.

Travis has also racked up a team-high 67 penalty minutes and is averaging nearly seven PIMs per contest.

*---Jared Tennant for Harrington Sports Media*

