

WSHL WEEKLY NOTES 11.23.18 – NORTHWEST DIVISION



BELLINGHAM BLAZERS (15-4-0-0, 45 pts.)

@BhamBlazers

The club still maintains its spot atop the Northwest Division, but the Bellingham Blazers received a wake-up call on Wednesday night when they fell to second-place Seattle, 8-2.

As well as the Blazers have played throughout the first half of the season, they shouldn't get complacent. The Totems are a hungry team and will be gunning for the Northwest Division title.

Bellingham has played 14 of its 19 games on the road, where it has posted an 11-3-0-0 record. The schedule will even out late in the season when the Blazers play eight of their final 11 contests at Bellingham Sportsplex.

The Blazers are back in action next weekend with a three-game set at home against Southern Oregon, the third-place team in the Northwest.

The series will mark the first matchup of the season between the two division rivals, who will play nine games against each other throughout the campaign.

SEATTLE TOTEMS (12-4-1-1, 39 pts)

@SeattleJrTotems

During their six previous seasons in the WSHL, the Seattle Totems struggled to find success playing in a competitive division.

But 18 games into the 2018-19 season, it appears the Totems have finally turned a corner. The team's 8-2 win over division-leading Bellingham on Wednesday further proved that Seattle is a much-improved squad.

The Totems and the Ogden Mustangs are the only two teams in the league that have yet to lose on home ice. The two clubs are a combined 15-0-0-0 at home.

Seattle will have another chance to keep up its perfect record at Olympicview Arena when it takes on West Sound in a three-game set next weekend.

The Totems will play two games of the series at home while traveling to Bremerton Ice Center for next Saturday night's contest.

Three Totes forwards have scored 30 points or more: Michael Shippee (17-28-45), Gabriel Sbop (16-21-37), and Dominik Cach (20-11-31), who leads the club in goals.

Linus Eriksson (14-15-29) is not far behind the trio. Seattle's improved offense has been a total team effort, and it has resulted in nearly six goals per game on average.

SOUTHERN OREGON SPARTANS (6-10-0-1, 19 pts.)
@wshlspartans

During their six-game road trip through Canada last week, the Southern Oregon Spartans saw up-and-down results.

The Spartans opened the trip with three blowout wins before dropping the final three games against the Edson Aeros (twice) and Hinton Wildcats.

As a result, Southern Oregon couldn't gain much ground in the Northwest Division standings. It remains firmly in third place, 20 points behind second-place Seattle.

The Spartans have two series left before the Western States Shootout in Las Vegas, and neither will be easy. Southern Oregon will battle Bellingham on the road for three games next weekend before hosting the Fresno Monsters the following week.

Fresno currently sits at 10-6-0-0, good for second place in the Western Division. The Monsters are historically one of the better teams in the WSHL and will present a challenge.

Southern Oregon needs some big wins in the coming weeks, or it could see itself fall into a sizeable hole in the division race. The next two weeks will decide whether the Spartans firmly cement themselves into third place or make themselves a legitimate contender near the top of the division.

WEST SOUND ADMIRALS (4-12-1-0, 14 pts.)
@wsadmirals

The West Sound Admirals were competitive in almost every game during their road trip through the Provincial Division, but they picked up just five standings points over six games.

The Admirals closed the trip out with a pair of close games against the Cold Lake Wings and Meadow Lake Mustangs.

Against Cold Lake, Cory Kane (9-5-14) scored an overtime game-winner to give his team two points. In Meadow Lake the next day, the Mustangs broke a 3-3 tie in the third period and would hold on for the 4-3 victory in regulation.

For a team like the Admirals, each game is about getting better. They aren't where they would like to be in terms of points, so the focus needs to be on improving day in and day out.

West Sound is the most penalized team in entire league with a total of 521 PIMs, good for an average of more than 30 minutes per contest.

The Ads' penalty kill unit is killing off 77.6 percent of opposing power plays, which is middle of the pack in the WSHL. But because of the high number of penalties called against them, the Admirals have spent more time than any other team on the penalty kill and have allowed the sixth-most power-play goals.

Cutting down on the penalties will be important in the coming weeks as West Sound takes on division rivals Seattle and Bellingham multiple times before the holiday break.

---Jared Tennant for Harrington Sports Media