

WSHL WEEKLY NOTES 12.13.18 – MOUNTAIN DIVISION



WSHL standings are expressed W-L-OTW-OTL (“W” and “L” represent regulation wins and losses; shootouts are included in overtime results). Three points are awarded for a regulation win, two for an overtime win and one for an overtime loss.

CASPER BOBCATS (7-14-0-0, 21 pts)

www.casperbobcats.com

@BobcatsCasper

The Bobcats swept nine points from Steamboat, going from two points behind to seven points ahead of the Wranglers with three regulation wins at Casper Ice Arena last week.

Casper head coach John Ambrefe is hoping that is an indicator that some early growing pains for the Bobcats are behind them.

“Having a lot of young players with no junior experience there was a learning curve,” he said. “The boys worked hard and learned how to play the game at this level and will continue to improve, we hope, in the second half of the season.”

Casper is off this week – returning to action in Las Vegas at the Western States Shootout where they will face the Meadow Lake Mustangs and Cold Lake Wings of the WSHL’s new Provincial Division, along with the Southern Oregon Spartans.

“We are hoping to have a good showing in Vegas and regroup for the stretch run,” said Ambrefe. “We are looking at adding 4-5 players over the break and will also look at possibly adding players through trades at the showcase.”

Czech import Daniel Silar, 20, will no doubt get some attention from scouts at the showcase. After starting the season by playing five games with the El Paso Rhinos, Silar joined the Bobcats on November 16 and, in nine games with Casper, has scored eight goals and added 11 assists for 19 points – over two points per game.

In seven of his nine games with the Bobcats he has registered multiple points and has generated 11 points (7-4-11) during his current four-game point streak. Silar scored a hat trick and added a pair of assists in Casper’s 8-2 win on Sunday that wrapped up their crucial three-game sweep of the Wranglers.

CHEYENNE STAMPEDE (2-20-0-1, 7 pts)

www.cheyennestampede.com

@StampsHockey

The Cheyenne Stampede, who host the Steamboat Wranglers in a crucial Mountain Division match-up this weekend, have been shuffling the deck in an attempt to change their fortunes.

Two players arrived in Cheyenne via trades in time to play last weekend. Forward Zachary Harrison joined the Stampede from the San Diego Sabers while goaltender Jonathan TerWisscha was brought in from the Alexandria Blizzard of the NAHL and made 69 saves in his WSHL debut.

Also added to the Stampede roster this week were 19-year-old F Kody Kifer and 20-year-old D Andrew Ware, both from Evansville in the NA3HL.

Another goaltender, G Michael Eastman, was acquired from the Seattle Totems and will join the Stampede following the holiday break.

“We are excited to be adding new players to the team hoping they will fill a much-needed void,” said Stampede general manager Mark Lantz.

This weekend's series presents the Stampede with an opportunity to make up some ground on the team directly ahead of them in the Mountain Division standings before they head off for Vegas and the Western States Shootout. At the showcase, the Stamps will face the Wichita Jr. Thunder and West Sound Admirals, as well as a select team from the CPJHL.

OGDEN MUSTANGS (21-1-0-1, 58 pts)

www.ogdenmustangs.com

@OgdenMustangs

The Ogden Mustangs will stop off in West Valley City on Friday to take on the rival Utah Outliers in a single game before continuing on to Las Vegas for the Western States Shootout.

Ogden, with just two losses all season (and only one of those coming in regulation), will no doubt be one of the more heavily-scouted teams at the showcase – especially considering they placed a player directly onto an NCAA Division I roster since last year's event.

Matus Spodniak was in the midst of his 69-goal season a year ago and is now a freshman at American International College of the Atlantic Hockey Association.

Scouts will have an opportunity to see this year's crop of Mustangs go head-to-head with the Fresno Monsters, El Paso Rhinos and Edson Aeros in Sin City.

Rhett Rampinelli (20-33-53), Ammon Anderson (16-26-42), Harry Gulliver (15-21-36), Ryan Mascali (6-25-31) and Matthew Thielemann will no doubt be on some scouts' radars just to name a few.

Playing behind the powerful Mustangs lineup, Artur Ogandzhanyan has been one of the more effective goaltenders in the league this season. He has posted an impressive 2.08 goals-against average and .927 save percentage to go along with his 12-0-1 record.

The Mustangs also had an experienced player re-join their lineup just in time to get some college looks at the showcase. Ogden is excited by the return of 20-year-old forward Zeke Zeier from the Topeka Pilots. Zeier, who scored 20 goals for the Mustangs in the 2016-17 season, scored three goals and added an assist in 16 NAHL games this season. He also spent the entire 2017-18 season with Topeka.

STEAMBOAT WRANGLERS (4-20-1-0, 14 pts)

www.steamboatwranglers.com

@SWranglers

A disappointing sweep at the hands of the Bobcats in Casper last week pushed Steamboat down into fourth place in the Mountain Division standings, but the Wranglers have a chance to jump back over the idle Bobcats prior to the showcase.

The Wranglers are in Cheyenne for three games against the Stampede. Both teams will be motivated to put some points in the bank before the holiday break, so it should make for an interesting series at the Cheyenne Ice and Events Center.

18-year-old Denver native Tristen Wells may very well catch the eye of some scouts. The 6'5" forward is hard to miss on the ice and also tops the Wranglers stat sheet with 19 points (9-10-19). He also has two seasons of junior hockey eligibility remaining, giving him plenty of time for further development.

Wells had points in nine of the first 10 games this season and has been a consistent presence on the Steamboat scoresheets all season long.

17-year-old goaltender Jordan Belley likely has one of their highest ceilings in the league when college scouts look between the pipes. Despite his youth, Belley has performed very well against much older players at a higher level than he has ever played at before.

Despite winning just three of his first 13 decisions for the Wranglers, Belley has been doing what he can, stopping the puck at an .899 clip and has made 40 or more saves in a game 10 times already – including two 69-save performances and a 70-save game in just his third junior start.

UTAH OUTLIERS (16-9-1-1, 48 pts)

www.UtahOutliers.com

@UtahOutliers

The Utah Outliers lost two of three games to the Northern Colorado Eagles last week, but did pick up three points in a 4-0 win in the middle game of the series – thanks to a 28-save shutout from Oscar Wahlgren and a pair of goals from Miroslav Hradecky.

As we outlined last week, the Outliers have played one of the most challenging schedules – if not THE most challenging schedules in the entire league this season.

The grueling slate may have resulted in a few more losses than Utah head coach Paul Taylor and his team would have liked, but it is testing the team and preparing them for the showcase, the second half of the season and, ultimately, the Thorne Cup playoffs.

The top three scorers on the Outliers so far this season are all 1998-born forwards playing their last year of junior hockey – making them prime targets for the college scouts at the showcase next week.

Matt Bartel (18-18-32), Nicholas Ness (13-18-31) and Zach Dornseifer (8-19-27) will no doubt have a full dance card when it comes to talking to schools for next year.

First things first, however, as the Outliers host rival Ogden on Friday evening. The first three games of the season series have gone to the Mustangs.

--- Compiled by Scott Harrington for Harrington Sports Media