

WSHL WEEKLY NOTES 01.04.19 – PROVINCIAL 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.

COLD LAKE WINGS (3-18-1-1, 12 pts)

www.coldlakewings.com

@ColdLakeWings

There are some intriguing inter-division match-ups among elite teams at the Western States Shootout that get a lot of the attention – and rightly so – but the Cold Lake Wings came up with one of the biggest wins at the showcase.

The Wings defeated the Steamboat Wranglers in their final game of the event to snap a 17-game losing streak in their final attempt to do so before the holiday break.

Anson Smith scored three goals, including a shorthanded tally that broke a 4-4 tie late in the second half, as the Wings won in an entertaining game, 7-5. Smith, a 2001-born forward, assumed the team scoring lead with 29 points (11-18-29).

The value of being able to enjoy some time away from the rink without an 18-game losing streak hanging over their heads should not be overlooked. It was a big “W” for the Cold Lake team.

The Wings take to the ice at Imperial Oil Place this weekend as they host the Edson Aeros and Hinton Wildcats Friday and Saturday, respectively.

Cold Lake is assured a post-season berth as all four teams in the Provincial Division will qualify for the playoffs this year. They have 28 games to play between now and then and each one represents an opportunity for the Wings players to develop – individually and as a team.

EDSON AEROS (15-6-1-1, 48 pts)

www.aeroshockey.ca

@AerosEdson

Provincial Division leaders at the break, the Edson Aeros were handed a tough slate of games for the Western States Shootout, and got a chance to see the league’s elite up close and personal for the first time.

The Aeros played the El Paso Rhinos, Long Beach Bombers and Ogden Mustangs – all division leaders – and had some very entertaining and competitive games but, ultimately, did not come away with any points in the standings.

The Aeros made a statement—a big one—in their showcase opener against the defending Thorne Cup champion El Paso Rhinos. The Aeros had leads of 3-0 and 4-1, showing they could play with the WSHL’s top teams, but the Rhinos were not going to be knocked off their perch that easily and came back with a vengeance—scoring four times in a span of 5:46 to take the lead. Liam Austin stopped 26 of 27 shots in the first half for Edson, but could not keep the Rhinos at bay all game.

The second game may have been even more impressive. The Long Beach Bombers, leaders of the Western Division, had one of the best showings at the event, but the Aeros played with them. Emil Johansson’s three goals were not enough, however, as the Bombers defeated the Aeros, 4-3.

Quinten Stempfeler assisted on both Edson goals in an 8-2 loss to the league’s top team, Ogden, in the Aeros’ final game.

Their 0-3 showing allowed the Hinton Wildcats to close to within six points at the break, which will make for an interesting race for the division title in the second half of the season.

HINTON WILDCATS (13-8-1-1, 42 pts)

www.hintonwildcats.ca

@HintonWildcats

A 4-3 win over the Steamboat Wranglers on the final day of the Western States Shootout ended the first half of the Hinton Wildcats inaugural WSHL season on a high note. The win drew the Wildcats to within six points of first place in the Provincial Division.

Hinton will try to make a run at the Edson Aeros in the second half, with the secondary goal of holding onto second place to secure home ice for the first round of the division playoffs. The Meadow Lake Mustangs improved quite a bit in December, but the Wildcats are 27 points ahead of them.

Hinton Wildcats built a 4-0 lead by halftime, then held on for a 4-3 win after a Steamboat rally (showcase games are two 25-minute halves). The Wranglers scored twice in the final 3:23 to get within a goal, but they could not get the equalizer past Hinton's Brendan Culbertson, who made 37 saves in the game. Brendan Auger scored two goals for the Wildcats – including the game-winner.

A two-game road trip through Cold Lake and Meadow Lake kicks off the second half for the Wildcats this weekend.

MEADOW LAKE MUSTANGS (5-18-0, 15 pts)

www.meadowlakemustangs.com

@ML_Mustangs

Shane Hounsell scored four goals for Meadow Lake, but the Casper Bobcats came back from a 6-3 deficit to beat the Mustangs, 7-6, on Day One of the Western States Shootout. It was a thrilling game but, ultimately, did not end the way the Mustangs would have liked.

They followed that game with losses to the Ontario (California) Avalanche (12-0) and a select team from the CPJHL (4-1).

The addition of Hounsell to the lineup was a huge factor in the Mustangs' improved play over the last month or so. He leads the team with 14 goals and 26 points in just 10 games played.

Hounsell was not the only key acquisition by the club. Andrew Hawes, Erik Ehrmantraut, Tylin Cameron and Justin Hebert all produced at more than a point-per-game clip after joining the lineup.

It will be interesting to see how the team comes together in the second half, and if they will be able to challenge the top two teams in the Provincial Division, to position themselves as the team nobody wants to play in the first round of the playoffs.

--- Compiled by Scott Harrington for Harrington Sports Media