

## WSHL WEEKLY NOTES 01.30.19 – WESTERN 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.*

### FRESNO MONSTERS (23-12-3-0, 75 pts)

@WSHLMonsters

[www.FresnoMonsters.com](http://www.FresnoMonsters.com)

They may have leveraged an additional seven games played, but the Fresno Monsters are at the top of the Western Division standings for the second week in a row.

The Monsters will host the San Diego Sabers this week for a Friday-Saturday series. They will be the final two home games of the 2018-19 WSHL regular season for Fresno. It will likely not be the last time they take to the Selland Arena ice, however. A top-two finish in the division would mean hosting a best-of-three division semifinal series in mid-late March.

The Monsters will play three away games next week, then will not play any games at all from February 9 to March 2 – a three-week hiatus – before playing their final five games of the season on the road.

Fresno's average age (19.0 years) has them in the middle of the pack in the league, but the Monsters are the most seasoned team in the Western Division with 1,385 games of WSHL experience on their roster.

Logan Domagala (159 games in his fourth WSHL season) and Taylor Hiatt (120 games in his third) are at the top of the list and another nine players have played 50+ WSHL games including both goaltenders – Tyler Mathews (fourth WSHL season) and Max Karlenzig.

**LONG BEACH BOMBERS (22-4-3-2, 74 pts)**

**@LBBombersHockey**

**[www.JrBombers.org](http://www.JrBombers.org)**

Although they have a superior winning percentage, the Long Beach Bombers find themselves behind the Fresno Monsters at the top of the Western Division standings.

After this weekend, the Bombers will play 11 of their final 15 regular season games away from The Rink, Lakewood. That includes inter-division series against a pair of first-place teams – Ogden and Bellingham.

So, while the Bombers have seven games in hand and stand a good chance to ultimately claim the division title, it will not be a cakewalk. They may, in fact, be entering the most challenging stretch of their regular season schedule.

The Bombers are known for the prolific offense, but they have allowed 49 fewer goals than any other team in the division. Much of that is due to veteran goaltender Domenic Bosetti, who is closing in on the all-time games played leader by a goaltender in WSHL history.

Bosetti's .932 save percentage is the best of his decorated career that includes a total of 76 regular season wins. After being a workhorse for the entire season, Bosetti has started just one of the last four games for Long Beach – posting a 22-save shutout over Valencia last Friday.

It appears that Bombers head coach Chris White plans on having Bosetti fresh when the post-season comes around.

**ONTARIO AVALANCHE (11-19-1-2, 37 pts)**

**@TmOntAvs**

**[www.OntarioAvalanche.com](http://www.OntarioAvalanche.com)**

Last week's three-game series in El Paso was an eye-opener for the Ontario Avalanche. The Avs failed to score on the trip, getting shut out for 180 minutes against the defending Thorne Cup champions.

Goaltender Connor Duffy was solid, as he has been all season, but he could only do so much and the Avs failed to generate any offense of their own. Things don't get any easier this week with a trip to Long Beach for a pair of games against the Bombers.

Ontario's total goals for and against for the season are comparable to the third-place San Diego Sabers, who have managed to build a nine-point lead on the Avalanche in the division standings. Stealing some points in Long Beach this week would be a great start, but the Avs have to focus on winning their three remaining games against the Sabers (all at home) if they want to move up a notch in the standings by the end of the season.

Ontario would love to be in a position to overtake the Sabers for the #3 seed in the divisional playoffs when they head to Southern Oregon for a three-game series that closes out their regular season March 8-10.

To give Duffy some support, the Avalanche acquired 2002-born goaltender Aleksei Vereshchagin from the rival Sabers. He put together a 4-3-1 record with a 3.83 goals-against average and .904 save percentage in eight games for San Diego over the first two months of the WSHL season – numbers comparable to Duffy.

A pair of 20-year-old forwards also came over in the deal – Jan Sokolik and Evgeny Tretyak – in exchange for 19-year-olds Aidan Harding, a goaltender, and Andrew Olson, a defenseman.

**SAN DIEGO SABERS (13-15-3-1, 46 pts)**  
@sdsabershockey  
[www.SanDiegoSabersHockey.com](http://www.SanDiegoSabersHockey.com)

With a total of 791 WSHL games played on their roster, the San Diego Sabers are the least experienced team in the Western Division. As a matter of fact, on the one team in the league – the Casper Bobcats – has fewer cumulative WSHL games played on their roster outside of the members of the new Provincial Division.

That being said, the Sabers are having a fine season, and are gearing up for a run in the Western Division playoffs. They look like they are on a collision course with the Fresno Monsters for a best-of-three division semifinal series that would likely take place in Fresno.

The Sabers last won a playoff series in 2015 when they finished in sixth place in the division but upset #3 seed Long Beach, two games to one, in a Western Division Quarterfinal series.

The team has been playing the top two teams in the division tough, and put a scare into the Ogden Mustangs last week, so they are starting to look like one of those teams that nobody wants to play in the first round.

Last weekend, in three games against the WSHL's top team, the Sabers failed to collect any points but played Ogden tough all series – culminating with their 4-2 lead in the second period of Saturday's game before eventually losing, 7-4.

Two goals in the first 4:30 of the second period gave the Sabers a two-goal lead in that game but the Mustangs came to life and scored the next five.

Marshall McKallip again kept the Sabers in the game most of the way, making 69 saves, but he could not hold the Mustangs back the whole game.

Josef Kankovsky scored twice for San Diego.

**VALENCIA FLYERS (6-18-0-4, 22 pts)**

@valenciaflyers

[www.ValenciaFlyers.com](http://www.ValenciaFlyers.com)

A three-game trip to Bremerton, WA to play the West Sound Admirals this weekend follows a seven-game stretch where the Valencia Flyers faced the top two teams in the Western Division six times (Long Beach 4x and Fresno 2x).

Valencia has lost seven games in a row, garnering just one point in the playoffs during that span for a 5-4 overtime loss to Fresno on January 19. The Flyers last win came on December 21, 4-2, over the Southern Oregon Spartans in the final game of the Western States Shootout.

Vincent Dekumbis, who joined the Flyers at the 2016 trading deadline during a 35-goal season, is producing as an NCAA Division III freshman at Lawrence University.

Dekumbis had 31 goals in 39 games in what was his second season with the Las Vegas Storm. He put up 10 points (4-6-10) in 11 games down the stretch after joining Valencia, and added a pair of assists in their playoff run, which ended with a two-game loss to the Long Beach Bombers in the Western Division Final.

The 5'11", 185-pound Swiss national then moved on to have a few productive seasons in the NA3HL and NAHL before heading to college. He has 11 points (5-6-11) this season in the first 19 NCAA DIII games of his career, ranking third on the Vikings in both goals and points.

*-- Compiled by Scott Harrington for Harrington Sports Media*