

## WSHL WEEKLY NOTES 02.05.19 – MID-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.*

**DALLAS SNIPERS (21-17-1-0, 65 pts.)**

**@DallasSnipers**

Despite losing their series against El Paso last weekend, the Dallas Snipers logged one of their most impressive victories of the season with a 7-5 win over the Rhinos in the third and final game of the weekend.

Hunter Best, Karolis Krasilnikovas, and Gasper Konc each netted a pair of goals while leading scorer Jasa Jenko dished out three assists in what was arguably Dallas’ best team win of the year. The Snipers were able to showcase their depth as they took down a strong opponent without any of their top three scorers finding the back of the net.

Furthermore, the win allowed Dallas to stay within three points of Northern Colorado for third place in the Mid-Western Division. The two clubs will meet for a pivotal series in Colorado March 1-3.

The Snipers will hit the road this weekend for a three-game matchup in Wichita. Dallas has beaten the Jr. Thunder seven of out nine times this season in what’s been a fairly competitive season series.

A couple of weeks ago in Dallas, the Snipers took two of three games against Wichita while out-scoring the Jr. Thunder 21-10. Forward Eric Eaton (16-38-54) had a productive series with three goals and six assists.

### **EL PASO RHINOS (28-8-3-2, 95 pts.)**

**@El\_Paso\_Rhinos**

The El Paso Rhinos had their nine-game winning streak halted last weekend, but still managed to take six of nine possible points against Dallas.

The visit to Dr. Pepper Star Center marked the Rhinos' final regular season road trip. They will play their final three series of the season at home against Northern Colorado, Oklahoma City, and Wichita.

El Paso has won 10 of their 12 games in the second half of the season, including a pair of victories over Oklahoma City on the road.

Forwards Jonas Burman (27-33-60) and Martin Dubsky (21-39-60) are the leading scorers on a Rhinos team that has impressive depth similar to El Paso rosters in years past.

With goals last weekend, Dillon Manchester and Max Kamper became the fourth and fifth 20-goal scorers in the Rhinos' locker room, respectively. Kamper needs 16 points over the Rhinos final nine games to match his point total from last season (55).

This week, El Paso is set to take on Northern Colorado team that has given the Rhinos some quality competition throughout the season. After that, a massive series against second-place Oklahoma City is coming up from February 22-24.

### **NORTHERN COLORADO EAGLES (22-14-0-2, 68 pts.)**

**@NoCoEagles**

The Northern Colorado Eagles picked up nine valuable points in the Mid-Western Division standings over the weekend with a 4-3 win over the Cheyenne Stampede in Wyoming as well as a pair of home victories over the Casper Bobcats.

Now riding a four-game winning streak, the Eagles will spend the week preparing for an El Paso squad that has bested them in five of six matchups this season. Northern Colorado's lone win over the Rhinos came back on November 16 when Mark Revniaga's three-point performance (2 G, 1 A) propelled the Eagles to a 6-3 victory.

Northern Colorado has effectively defended home ice so far with a 10-4-1-0 record. The fans at Greeley Ice Haus seem to be heavily factoring into the Eagles' success this season.

Following this weekend's games, Northern Colorado will take on a couple of opponents from the Mountain Division with another road game against Cheyenne as well as a pair of games against the Steamboat Wranglers.

The Eagles franchise played in the Mountain Division from 2013-2018, winning a division championship in 2015-16 and finishing in the top three in all five seasons.

**OKLAHOMA CITY BLAZERS (28-8-1-1, 87 pts.)**  
**@OKCBlazersWSHL**

The Oklahoma City Blazers used a three-game sweep of Wichita to crawl three points closer to the top spot in the division with 12 games remaining on their schedule. Their series against El Paso later this month will be crucial in their pursuit of the division title. OKC currently has four games in hand on El Paso.

Six of Oklahoma City's final nine games are against Dallas. The Snipers are a tough opponent, as they proved on January 19 when they logged a 7-4 win over the Blazers, and in Sunday's win over El Paso, but OKC is leading the season series against Dallas and will need every possible point over the final month of the regular season.

Forward Vitali Mikhailov has fallen behind the race for the WSHL scoring title, but the 20-year-old Russian is having his best season since joining the league by a wide margin.

Mikhailov has netted 43 goals to go along with 40 assists over 38 appearances for a total of 83 points. He recently hit 200 career points and needs 32 more points over the remainder of the regular season to become the all-time leading scorer in Blazers franchise history.

After taking this weekend off, Oklahoma City will return to action next weekend for three home games against Dallas.

**WICHITA JR. THUNDER (8-29-0-2, 26 pts.)**  
**@JrThunderHockey**

The Wichita Jr. Thunder put up a fight but were overmatched last weekend in a three-game series against Oklahoma City that kicked off a six-game homestand.

On Sunday, Wichita got off to a slow start but played well overall in a 7-4 loss. The Blazers put up the first four goals of the game, and it proved to be too much for the young Jr. Thunder to recover from.

Four different players scored in the loss for Wichita while Felix Ryberg and Carson Weingartner each dished out a pair of assists.

This weekend, the Jr. Thunder will wrap up their 12-game season series with Dallas at Wichita Ice Center. Wichita has beaten the Snipers twice this season, but five of the nine matchups have been decided by two goals or less.

From February 15-17, the Jr. Thunder have an interesting matchup against the Casper Bobcats on the road. Casper isn't in a great position at 12 games below .500, but the Bobcats are in third place in the Mountain Division and hold a 10-point lead over the next closest team.

*---Jared Tennant for Harrington Sports Media*

