

## WSHL WEEKLY NOTES 02.06.19 – 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 (28-12-3-0, 90 pts)**

**@WSHLMonsters**

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

In each of the last four weeks the Fresno Monsters have had to buckle down and win a one-goal game to keep their 12-game winning streak alive. That streak has kept the Monsters in first place in the Western Division – a single point ahead of the Long Beach Bombers.

Friday’s 3-2 win over the San Diego Sabers at Gateway Ice Center in Fresno was the final home game of the 2018-19 regular season for the Monsters. Stanislav Danaev scored the game-winning goal with 4:47 left in the third period, extending a seven-game goal streak, and Max Karlenzig made 45 saves.

Danaev has scored 10 goals during his seven-game streak, giving him 23 on the year – second on the team to Petr Philippov’s 29. The Moscow native has scored two goals in a game six times this season, but has yet to notch a hat trick.

Ten of those 12 straight wins came in Fresno, but the Monsters will take to the road for the rest of the regular season, beginning this weekend with a unique road trip that will see them play three division rivals in three nights in three different cities.

“It’s like a pro series playing in three different cities,” said Fresno head coach Kevin Kaminski. “But no excuses. We need to go on the road and take care of business. There’s nothing to save it for, we have three weeks off to heal so everyone needs to sacrifice the body and pay the price to find ways to win if we want to stay on top.”

The Monsters will visit Valencia, San Diego and Ontario in that order beginning Friday night at Valencia. It is their last chance to stockpile points before taking a three-week break in their schedule that will no doubt see the Bombers knock them out of first place.

“We’re going to get some rest, have some fun and skill work, then work on systems,” Kaminski said of how he plans to make use of the three-week hiatus. “We’ll tune up the special teams to get ready for the last five games then playoffs.”

While they may have to sit on the sidelines and watch the Bombers leverage their games in hand to knock them down into second place, that is far as they will fall. If third-place San Diego were to win out they would still only have 87 points. Fresno can finish no lower than second place in the division.

The Monsters may have played their final home game of the regular season but, with a top-two finish in the division secured, they are guaranteed at least two home playoff games.

### **LONG BEACH BOMBERS (27-4-3-2, 89 pts)**

**@LBBombersHockey**

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

While Fresno may have a longer winning streak going, the Long Beach Bombers have kept pace recently with a six-game heater of their own, keeping it alive with a pair of convincing wins over the fourth-place Ontario Avalanche last week.

For the second straight week, Long Beach has just two games on their schedule instead of the grueling three-in-three weekends that are so common in the WSHL. The Bombers will visit Valencia Friday and San Diego Saturday and try to keep things rolling.

Artem Korolev’s goal Thursday night against the Avalanche not only extended his point streak to 12 games, it made him the fourth member of the Bombers to reach the 20-goal plateau, joining Gennady Malashenko (26), Tomas Urbanec (26) and Erik Sillerstrom (25).

Korolev, who has since extended his point streak to 13 games, has points in 19 of his last 20 games going back to November 21, putting up 47 points (13-34-47) in that span.

Long Beach should not have to wait long for their fifth member of the 20-goal club as Diego Gluck is sitting on 19 goals for the year.

Christoffer Juvas, a 19-year-old Swedish defenseman, scored his first WSHL goal Friday in an 11-2 win over Ontario. In addition to the goal, which came on the power play, Juvas picked up a pair of assists. The 6'0", 180-pound blue liner joined the team two weeks ago and has four points (1-3-4) in five games for the Bombers.

**ONTARIO AVALANCHE (11-24-1-3, 38 pts)**

**@TmOntAvs**

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

Three straight wins in mid-January gave way to five straight losses for the Ontario Avalanche, but those five games came against El Paso (x3) and Long Beach (x2), two of the top contenders for the 2019 Thorne Cup championship.

The losing streak reached six on Sunday with a loss to the team the Avalanche are chasing in the Western Division standings, the San Diego Sabers, but the 4-3 OT loss was a game that Ontario was in all the way.

Ontario led, 3-2, with three minutes to but the Sabers tied it, then won the game with a quick strike just :22 into sudden-death. It was a wrenching turn of events that translated into a four-point swing in the standings. If they had held on for the regulation win, the Avs would be just six points behind San Diego this week.

With the Sabers coming back to town for a two-game set February 16-17, the Avs still have an opportunity to make a move in the standings. For now, the Avalanche will stay home and play a single game this week, hosting Fresno on Saturday. It will give the team a chance to test themselves against the Monsters while staying relatively fresh for the big series the following week.

Ontario played three games at Fresno a month ago and, while they lost all three games, they were not run out of the building by any means. If they can keep things even tighter against the Monsters on Saturday it would be the latest indicator that the Avalanche are getting more competitive as the season wears on – a positive sign heading into the post-season regardless of where they end up finishing in the division race.

**SAN DIEGO SABERS (13-20-4-1, 48 pts)**

**@sdsabershockey**

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

It is common for teams in the WSHL to play three games in three days—generally against the same team—but, in one of the more unique scheduling situations of the season, the San Diego Sabers will welcome three different division rivals to Ice-plex Escondido this weekend.

San Diego will have an opportunity to play both of the teams ahead of them in the Western Division standings—Long Beach and Fresno—not only giving them an opportunity to gain ground on their rivals, but also providing an opportunity to test themselves against potential playoff opponents. They will conclude the weekend's schedule with the Valencia Flyers.

The Sabers were busy last weekend as well, playing a pair of games in Fresno where they played competitively in a pair of losses (4-1 and 3-2) before stopping off in Ontario and posting a 4-3 overtime win. Jakub Vesely notched the overtime winner in that one with his team-leading 24th goal of the season.

The Sabers are gearing up for a playoff run in the Western Division. Towards that end they made a trade with the rival Ontario Avalanche last week. San Diego shipped goaltender Aleksei Vereshchagin and 20-year-old forwards Jan Sokolik and Evgeny Tretyak to the Avalanche for a pair of 19-year-olds: goaltender Aidan Harding and defenseman Andrew Olson.

**VALENCIA FLYERS (8-22-0-4, 28 pts)**

**@valenciaflyers**

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

It may be towards the bottom of the standings instead of the top, but there is an interesting race brewing between Valencia and Ontario for fourth place in the Western Division.

Don't underestimate the importance of moving up a notch for the Flyers. The division's #4 team will have home ice advantage against #5 for a best-of-three play-in series for the first round of the playoffs. The winner would advance to play the first-place team in the division semifinal round.

Valencia erupted for 28 goals in three games in Bremerton, WA against the West Sound Admirals last week. Unfortunately, they allowed the middle game to get away (9-6) but hit double-digits in wins Friday and Sunday. The Flyers were producing goals at a clip of 3.3 per game prior to the series, so the outburst was welcomed.

One of the facilitators of the enhanced scoring ability of the Flyers has been a defenseman – Chris Bisenieks. He scored a goal in all three games at West Sound, collecting eight points in all for the three-game set (3-5-8) and now has 11 points (3-8-11) in seven games since joining the lineup on January 10.

Bisenieks played for the California Wave 18U AA team the last two seasons.

Another defenseman, Connor Mullins, picked up five points (2-3-5) over the last two games in Bremerton, giving him 2-6-8 in 16 games this season. Mullins, 20, hails from Toronto and had stints with El Paso, Long Beach and Valencia last season. He played Junior B hockey in the GOJHL the season prior.

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