

## WSHL WEEKLY NOTES 02.08.19 – NORTHWESTERN 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.*

### **BELLINGHAM BLAZERS (29-10-0-1, 88 pts.)**

**@BhamBlazers**

The Bellingham Blazers will conclude a stretch of six consecutive games against Southern Oregon this weekend as they host the Spartans in a three-game set.

Of the Blazers’ final 11 contests, seven will take place at Bellingham Sportsplex, including a three-game series against the Western Division’s Long Beach Bombers from February 28-March 2.

Veteran forward Ilya Abubakirov re-joined Bellingham in mid-December and picked up right where he left off last season when he was second on the team with 82 points (38-44-82).

The Moscow, Russia native has 15 goals and 11 assists through 14 appearances and has blended in well with the Blazers impressive group of scorers that features players such as 80-point scorers Timothy Prexler (30-59-89) and Jamahl Eackett (36-49-85).

Abubakirov is currently on an impressive tear with nine points (seven goals, two assists) in his last three games, including a six-point effort in a 10-0 win over Southern Oregon on January 27.

The Blazers power play unit is surprisingly mediocre considering Bellingham has scored the fourth-most goals in the WSHL, but the club has shined on the penalty kill. The Blazers are killing off 88.1 percent of opposing power plays (third in WSHL) and have netted eight shorthanded goals.

Bellingham's goaltending tandem of Edward Coffey (2.63/.911) and Kolter Pawlick (2.43/.924) has been a huge part of that success. The duo has combined for a 23-8-0-1 record while splitting playing time throughout the campaign.

### **SEATTLE TOTEMS (22-11-1-2, 70 pts)**

**@SeattleJrTotems**

Last week, Seattle Totems Head Coach and General Manager Mike Murphy spoke on the rivalry between his club and Southern Oregon and anticipated a competitive series at the Medford Madhouse.

Murphy's prediction of a back-and-forth type of series proved to be correct as the Totems won the opening game 4-1 before falling by a 7-2 final the following night.

In the win last Friday, forward Tom Ignatovich provided the time of offensive boost that he's been well-known for over the course of his three-year WSHL career, scoring a goal and dishing out a pair of assists.

Leading scorer Michael Shippee added three assists of his own while the Totems overwhelmed Southern Oregon to the tune of a 47-27 advantage in shots on goal.

Ignatovich, who began his WSHL career with Seattle in 2016, reached 100 points in his career when he assisted on Linus Eriksson's goal in the final period on Friday night. That's quite an accomplishment for the 20-year-old.

Goaltender Ruslam Kulizade has been on fire since being added to Seattle's roster, stopping 73 of 78 shots (.936 save percentage) over a pair of starts to earn two wins, including a 36-save shutout in Seattle's 1-0 victory over Bellingham on January 20.

## **SOUTHERN OREGON SPARTANS (10-24-1-1, 33 pts.)**

**@wshlspartans**

The Southern Oregon Spartans split their two-game series with Seattle last weekend and reached double-digit wins on the season.

Furthermore, the Spartans win allowed them to maintain their eight-point lead over fourth-place West Sound in the Northwest Division standings.

After this weekend's series on the road in Bellingham, Southern Oregon will close out the regular season with a 12-game homestand, giving the Spartans plenty of time to improve upon their 5-13-1-0 mark on home ice.

With 44 points (14-30-44) on the year, blueliner Axel Low currently sits just outside the top five in scoring among WSHL defensemen. Teammate Michele Vignoli Sanin (10-21-31) is inside the top 15 on that same list.

Low, 20, has already surpassed his previous career high in points (37) that he set last year with the Spartans. The 6-foot-5, 210-pound Swede is third on the Spartans roster in points behind forward Eric Vanderhoff (27-32-59) and Logan Emery (17-28-45).

## **WEST SOUND ADMIRALS (7-29-2-0, 25 pts.)**

**@wsadmirals**

The West Sound Admirals have been involved in some extremely high-scoring affairs lately. Last weekend against the Valencia Flyers at home, the Ads dropped two of three games in a series that featured a combined 46 goals.

After a forgettable 12-2 defeat in the series opener, West Sound bounced back with a 9-6 win on Saturday. Several Admirals had eye-popping stat lines, but a goal and six assists from defenseman Harmen Vining stood out the most.

Valencia used a pair of late goals to claim a 10-7 win in what was a wildly entertaining series finale. Vining had another big game with five assists while forward Oliwer Stensson had a hat trick.

West Sound has already begun its scheduled games this week with a 9-5 loss against Seattle on Wednesday night.

Stensson is on an incredible tear with a 10-game point streak and 12 points (6-6-12) in his last three outings. Vining is riding a six-game point streak of his own and has 18 points (2-16-18) over his last five games to become first defenseman in the league to reach 50 points on the season.

Stensson, Vining, and the rest of the Admirals will look to continue their recent offensive surge as they wrap up a two-game series against Seattle on Saturday night.

*---Jared Tennant for Harrington Sports Media*