

## WSHL WEEKLY NOTES 02.14.19 – MOUNTAIN 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.*

**CASPER BOBCATS (14-24-1-0, 44 pts)**

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

**@BobcatsCasper**

The Casper Bobcats responded to the direct threat to their third-place position in the Mountain Division, knocking the Steamboat Wranglers back with a pair of wins last week.

Now a 16-point lead over Steamboat, combined with four games in hand on the Wranglers, pretty much sews up the #3 seed for the Bobcats, who can start prepping for a best-of-three Mountain Division Semifinal series against the Outliers in Utah coming up in March. Barring a herculean effort by the Wranglers, that series is pretty much locked in.

When Casper head coach John Ambrefe looks at his schedule, however, he also sees Utah coming to Casper for a three-game series to wrap up the regular season March 8-10. That series is shaping up to be a dress rehearsal for a best-of-three playoff series.

“The Utah series should give us a good barometer of where we are going into the playoffs,” Ambrefe said. “Utah has a very talented team and they skate hard every shift. If we match their intensity and protect the puck to limit our turnovers we should be in good shape.”

Next up, however, is a visit from the Wichita Jr. Thunder for three games this weekend. The Jr. Thunder are coming off their most impressive series of the season – posting three straight one-goal wins over the Dallas Snipers last week.

**CHEYENNE STAMPEDE (5-35-2-2, 21 pts)**

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

**@StampsHockey**

With seven games remaining in the 2018-19 Western States Hockey League regular season for the Cheyenne Stampede, the team takes on the Northern Colorado Eagles Friday evening at Cheyenne Ice and Events Center. It is the only game of the weekend for the Stampede.

Seven games left and seven points behind the Steamboat Wranglers in the Mountain Division standings. The Stamps are trying to catch up with the Wranglers to earn home ice advantage for a potential best-of-three playoff series between the two teams that is looking more and more likely.

Last week, Cheyenne had the tall task of hosting the Mountain Division’s second-place team, the Utah Outliers, for three games.

On Friday, Bryan Watters tied the game midway through the third period, but the Outliers responded just :11 later to restore their lead and won, 5-3. It was a tremendous effort by the Stampede that included 54 saves from goaltender Brendan Carew.

With Utah up, 3-2, Hakan Salt was able to corral the puck in a scrum on the left-wing boards in the Cheyenne net and get the puck to Kody Kifer and he took off down the ice with Watters on a two-on-two. Kifer threaded a pass to Watters that he collected on his backhand as he split the Utah defense. Cheyenne’s leading scorer was able to hold off the defender and make a move to his forehand, holding onto the puck until the last second and popping it past Utah goaltender Oscar Wahlgren.

Utah won Saturday and Sunday as well, but the Casper Bobcats did the Stamps a favor by beating Steamboat twice, preventing them from building on their lead in the standings.

The Stampede will host Casper for a three-game series next weekend before closing out the regular series with a trip to Ogden March 1-3.

**OGDEN MUSTANGS (37-1-0-2, 113 pts)**

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

**@OgdenMustangs**

With 113 points in the standings, the Ogden Mustangs have collected 94.2% of the points available to them through 40 games played.

The Mustangs return to the ice after a week off for a big series against the Long Beach Bombers – leaders in the Western Division – for what should be a very entertaining and informative three-game series at The Ice Sheet. The Bombers have the second-best points percentage in the entire WSHL at 82.5%.

Aside from bringing in Lukas Radina from Northern Colorado, the Mustangs did not make any deals within the league at the trade deadline, but that does not mean that general manager and head coach Jake Laime was not busy.

“No big trades to announce,” said Laime. “We had some opportunities but chose to fill some needs from outside of the league instead.”

2000-born forward Alex Engan played High School and Midget hockey in his native Alaska until this season, which he split between Canada’s coasts. He played Junior A hockey in the Maritimes and Junior B in British Columbia where he had 10 goals and 10 assists, to go along with 104 penalty minutes, in just 27 games with the Kerry Park Islanders.

Stephon Perreault, 20, is a Colorado-born defenseman who spent the last three seasons playing Junior A hockey in Canada. He can be an experienced, stabilizing force on the back end for the Mustangs. He had 13 points (4-9-13) with 74 PIM in 36 games for the La Ronge Ice Wolves (SJHL).

Quebecois netminder Kevin Tardif has spent the last two seasons playing Junior A hockey in Ontario, playing in the OJHL and NOJHL. Tardif, 20, checks in at 6’4” and 192 pounds and has the size and experience to contribute if called upon.

Laime used the week to get the new players acclimated and find some continuity with his lines.

“Long Beach is another series. We don’t read into who we play, and we prepare the same regardless,” said Laime. “If we bring our game the way we know we can, I’m confident it will be a fun, fast and competitive weekend. If we don’t, the Bombers are a team that we know can capitalize.”

**STEAMBOAT WRANGLERS (8-32-1-2, 28 pts)**

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

**@SWranglers**

It is starting to look like a certainty that Steamboat will have to play Cheyenne in the first round to see who gets to travel to Ogden to play the Mustangs in the Mountain Division semifinals. Even if they got past that challenge, they would need to win yet another series to advance to the Thorne Cup.

With that tough row to hoe in the Mountain Division playoffs, Steamboat has started to bring in some younger players, perhaps giving themselves a head start on building their roster for next season.

Nevada White, who joined the Steamboat roster two weeks ago and has scored two goals in six games, had a seven-game stint in the WSHL as a 15-year-old with the 2015-16 Colorado Evolution. White, now 18, played in the RMJHL with Steamboat last year and collected 15 points (4-11-15) and 65 PIM in 31 games. He spent the 2016-17 season playing for the Evolution's U16 squad.

6'3", 190-pound defenseman Parker Wells arrived from Bellingham where he had six assists in 27 games. The 17-year-old blue liner hails from Germantown, WI.

Another youngster, forward Lewallen Newman, was brought up from the Butte Cobras of the NA3HL. Newman is already 6'2" and 220-pounds at 16 years of age. He produced six points (2-4-6) while collecting 16 PIM in 27 games with the Cobras.

**UTAH OUTLIERS (27-13-2-1, 86 pts)**

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

**@UtahOutliers**

Following a nine-point sweep in Cheyenne, the Utah Outliers will take this week off to rest up for their final eight regular season games, which will consist of a home-and-home set against Ogden February 22-23, and then six road games – three each at Steamboat and Casper.

That final series, to be played March 8-10, is looking like good practice for the Mountain Division Semifinals, which would be played two weeks later in West Valley City.

The Outliers brought in Cheyenne's leading scorer, Bryan Watters, to bolster their scoring depth. Watters led the Stampede in goals (28), assists (25) and points (53) at the time of his departure.

Another potential impact player brought in by general manager and head coach Paul Taylor at the trade deadline is 6'5", 220-pound forward Austin Dennison. Dennison, 18, is a Missoula, MT native who played two seasons for the Missoula Bruins in the NA3HL before heading up to Western Canada to play Junior B for the Campbell River Storm (VIJHL) and Creston Valley Thunder Cats (KIJHL) this season.

He scored twice in the three-game series at Cheyenne last week and had 31 points (11-20-31), to go along with 56 PIM, in 44 games last year for Missoula.

Subtractions from the Utah roster included forwards Mikey Power and Reese Tambellini and backup goaltender Jack Walsh.

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