

WSHL WEEKLY NOTES 02.28.19 – 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 (16-28-1-0, 50 pts)

www.casperbobcats.com

@BobcatsCasper

The Casper Bobcats are locked in. They cannot catch the second-place Utah Outliers, nor can either of the teams behind them in the Mountain Division standings catch them.

That could be part of the reason they let a couple of games get away against the fifth-place Cheyenne Stampede over the weekend. The Stampede played hard for sure, but the Bobcats had beaten them in all six of their previous meetings this season.

The Bobcats have six games left on their regular season slate and they will be excellent tune-ups for the playoffs starting with a three-game set against the Blazers in Oklahoma City this weekend. The Blazers are an elite WSHL team with Thorne Cup aspirations and they are still in the hunt for first place in the Mid-Western Division so the Bobcats can expect their “A” game in this series.

Casper will then close out the regular season March 8-10 against their first playoff opponent – the Utah Outliers.

All three Bobcat goalies saw action in Cheyenne last weekend. Head coach John Ambrefe will likely want to settle on a #1 for the playoffs. 19-year-old Henry Denee (5-5-0, 4.33, .900) has the best numbers but 19-year-old Ludwig Nordqvist (7-12-0, 4.53, .895) carried most of the load in the first half of the season and has won four of his last five starts. 20-year-old Kayne Pasquet (4-9-0, 5.15, .887) brings WSHL experience to the crease.

CHEYENNE STAMPEDE (7-37-2-2, 27 pts)

www.cheyennestampede.com

@StampsHockey

Most of the high points in the Cheyenne Stampede season – and five of their seven wins – have come since the first of the year. They may be the fifth-place team in the Mountain Division but they are playing some of their best hockey of the season – even after dealing leading scorer Bryan Watters to Utah at the trading deadline.

The Stamps closed out a 10-game homestand – and their 2018-19 home schedule – by taking two of three from Casper last week. It left them one point behind the Steamboat Wranglers going into their final three games of the regular season, which will be played in Ogden against the Mustangs this weekend.

That means the Stamps must take at least one point from the league’s top team if they want a shot at hosting a first-round series against the Wranglers, who have six games left to play.

Should they come up short, they will travel to Steamboat to take on the Wranglers in a best-of-three series following some down time during the final week of the regular season.

It's pretty impressive that the Stampede won two of three games against Casper – and scored 11 goals in their two wins – after trading Watters, who had figured in 56% of their goals.

Hakan Salt and Kody Kifer scored matching hat tricks in a 6-4 win over the Bobcats on Friday. Salt scored two more in a 5-2 win on Sunday, but three other Stamps lit the lamp as well.

OGDEN MUSTANGS (41-2-0-2, 125 pts)

www.ogdenmustangs.com

@OgdenMustangs

The league's top team, the Ogden Mustangs, will close out their schedule by playing six games against the fourth- and fifth-place teams in the division over the final two weeks of regular season play.

That will be followed by a week off before returning to the ice to host a Mountain Division Semifinal series March 22-24.

That's not exactly ramping up the intensity as the playoff approach for the Mustangs, but they will still enter the post-season as the prohibitive favorites.

Winning out would give the 'Stangs 143 points in the final standings. They are already assured a spot in the Thorne Cup as the host team.

With assists in both games against Utah last week, Ogden's leading scorer Rhett Rampinelli (47-55-102) now has points in 23 of his last 24 games.

Kerry Kruzel (18-32-50) hit the 50-point mark, giving the Mustangs six skaters with 50+ points.

STEAMBOAT WRANGLERS (8-34-1-2, 28 pts)

www.steamboatwranglers.com

@SWranglers

A week off gave the Steamboat Wranglers a chance to rest up for the final two weeks of the regular season, which they will spend playing the top two teams in the division on home ice.

Steamboat is all but assured home ice for a first-round series against Cheyenne and six games against the best competition the division has to offer is a great way to ramp up for the post-season.

Experience is always a factor to look at come playoff time. The Wranglers are in the lower-third of the league in career WSHL games played as a team (#16 with 1,128) but that does not count playoff experience gained when the Wranglers played in the RMJHL.

Avery Albert leads the way with 174 career games played. He accumulated those games with three different WSHL teams over the last three seasons. Jensen Baehr (112) and Ryan Brown (89) are the most seasoned players after Albert.

2001-born goaltender Jordan Belley has been a difference-maker on many nights during the regular season, but has lost his last six decisions – and nine of his last 10.

The Wranglers' 5'8", 180-pound netminder will no doubt see plenty of rubber over the next two weeks...

UTAH OUTLIERS (27-15-2-1, 86 pts)

www.UtahOutliers.com

@UtahOutliers

Six road games – starting this week at Steamboat – will take the Utah Outliers to the end of their 2018-19 regular season schedule.

The Outliers already know that they will open the playoffs with a best-of-three Mountain Division Semifinal series against the Casper Bobcats. They also close the regular season with a three-game series at Casper next week.

The Outliers are one of the most well-balanced, deep, teams in the league offensively. Their 221 goals scored as a team rank them second in the division behind Ogden and 8th in the 23-team WSHL, but what makes them tough to match up against is more than just the volume of goals they are able to produce. It is more about the number of players that get in on the act.

Utah has 13 players with 20 or more points and eight of those players have accumulated 32+ points. So which player or line do you focus on shutting down?

With 19 goals, Zach Dornseifer not only has a chance to become the fifth Outlier skater to hit the 20-goal plateau this season, he is only two goals short of the franchise all-time leader Jurijs Moiseicenko, who scored 47 goals over three seasons with the Salt Lake City Moose (2013-2016).

--- Compiled by Scott Harrington for Harrington Sports Media