

WSHL WEEKLY NOTES 03.08.19 – 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 (34-12-0-3, 105 pts.) **@BhamBlazers**

Results were all over the place in the Bellingham Blazers’ three-game home series against the Long Beach Bombers last weekend. After the Bombers claimed a 5-4 overtime win followed by a blowout 13-1 victory, the Blazers shutout Long Beach in a 4-0 win in the third and final contest.

Timothy Prexler (39-75-114) and Jamahl Eackett (49-62-111) continue to impress with career-best years and both players rank in the top five of the WSHL in scoring.

The Blazers haven't clinched the Northwest Division title yet, but odds are that they will win their first regular season division crown in franchise history either this week or next.

Bellingham has two games left, both against second-place Seattle. The only way the Totems can take over the top seed is if they win all three of their games against West Sound this weekend in regulation and sweep the Blazers in regulation next weekend.

Seattle has given Bellingham all it can handle throughout the season, but the veteran Blazers appear to be hungry for the first seed and an opening-round matchup against a depleted West Sound squad.

One of the biggest advantages of having one of the more experienced teams in the WSHL is the level of discipline exhibited by Bellingham. Under head coach Mark Collins, the Blazers have only 689 penalty minutes, the third-fewest in the WSHL and the fewest by far in the Northwest Division.

SEATTLE TOTEMS (29-14-1-2, 91 pts)

@SeattleJrTotems

The Seattle Totems dropped two out of three games in a disappointing series against the San Diego Sabers last weekend, but they're not out of the race for the division title just yet.

If Seattle can pull off a three-game sweep of West Sound this weekend with all three wins coming regulation, they will setup next week's two-game matchup against Bellingham as an opportunity to take home the first Northwest Division title in franchise history.

"We're very excited that our goal of winning the Northwest Division regular season banner is still alive," said Totems Head Coach Michael Murphy. "We know it's going to be hard to win out, but it's possible. I think week-in and week-out, we see a lot of parity in the WSHL where anyone can beat anyone else, and that's a good thing for our league."

Forward Linus Eriksson has been on a tear since early February, collecting 20 points (12-8-20) over his last 11 games, including a hat trick in Seattle's 11-0 win over West Sound on February 27.

On the year, Eriksson is the Totems' third-leading scorer with a 31-34-65 scoring line and has the most goals on the team.

Seattle forwards Alec Johnson and Dmitrii Munirov will be taking on their former team this weekend. Both players were traded to the Totems from West Sound prior to the WSHL trade deadline.

Both are proven offensive contributors, as Johnson has averaged exactly a point per game with 42 points (16-26-42) and Munirov is having a fantastic rookie season with 20 goals and 29 assists for a total of 49 points over 39 outings.

SOUTHERN OREGON SPARTANS (17-28-2-1, 56 pts.)

@wshlspartans

The Southern Oregon Spartans got back on track last weekend with a dominant three-game sweep of West Sound that featured a 10-0 shutout victory behind a 23-save effort by Chris O'Shaugnessy.

The Spartans will finish the regular season with three 70-point scorers: Eric Vanderhoff (32-45-77), Axel Low (27-47-74), and Logan Emery (29-44-73). That trio has scored 88 goals, nearly half of Southern Oregon's total offensive output on the season.

Southern Oregon has had mixed results over the last several weeks. It has dominated six matchups against West Sound, but was swept by Seattle from February 22-24.

The Spartans are likely headed towards a first-round best-of-three series against Seattle from March 21-24, barring a late surge from the Totems that propels them into first place.

Southern Oregon's offense, which is averaging 4.23 goals per game, is deeper than it's been all year after the additions of four point-per-game players at the trade deadline: Matej Valicek (7-13-20), Vladislav Polyashov (6-9-15), Jan Sokolik (6-6-12), and Artem Popov (3-6-9).

Goals can be produced from anyone up-and-down the lineup on any given night, and that's something that will make the Spartans a dangerous opponent come playoff time.

Southern Oregon will finish out its regular season and complete a 12-game homestand this weekend with a three-game series against the Ontario Avalanche.

WEST SOUND ADMIRALS (7-39-2-0, 25 pts.)

@wsadmirals

A long regular season will finally come to an end this weekend when the West Sound Admirals take on Seattle in a three-game set.

The series will begin on Friday night at Bremerton Ice Center before moving to Olympicview Arena the following evening. The Admirals will play their final game before the playoffs this Sunday afternoon on home ice.

West Sound has logged three wins over Seattle this season. On October 28, it pulled off a 5-4 victory after a go-ahead goal midway through the final period.

During a three-game series against the Totems from November 29-December 1, the Ads posted back-to-back wins over Seattle in very different ways, blowing the Totems out 11-6 before earning their second overtime win of the season by a 6-5 final the following afternoon in the series finale.

West Sound is likely looking at a division semi-finals series against Bellingham in a couple of weeks. The young, inexperienced squad will look to make some noise and upset a Blazers team that is enjoying the best season in franchise history.

--Jared Tennant for Harrington Sports Media