

WSHL WEEKLY NOTES 03.15.19 – PROVINCIAL 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.

COLD LAKE WINGS (4-35-2-2, 18 pts)

www.coldlakewings.com

@ColdLakeWings

The Cold Lake Wings wrap up their first regular season in the WSHL with a home-and-home series against the Meadow Lake Mustangs this Friday and Saturday.

Next up for the Wings will be a best-of-three Provincial Division Semifinal series at Edson March 22-24.

With four wins on the season, and going on the road to face the team with the second-best winning percentage in the league, the Wings are the definition of a long-shot. But that's why we play the games.

The first playoff series in team history will, at minimum, give the many young players on the roster some valuable experience competing against one of the elite teams in junior hockey in the post-season.

Cold Lake is in a position to bring back almost their entire team as forward Jesse Hayrliw is the only 2000-birth year player still on the roster.

One of the better acquisitions at the trade deadline, 18-year-old Riley Smith was acquired from the Bellingham Blazers and has put up 19 points (5-14-19) in 16 games with Cold Lake.

The team's leading scorer was 2002-birthyear forward Conor Frith (15-33-48), following by Ilias Okemow (2000/19-20-39) and Anson Smith (2001/13-23-36).

Dylan Tonks, who has scored 17 goals in 12 games since joining the team, is another player with two years of junior eligibility remaining.

EDSON AEROS (35-6-1-1, 108 pts)

www.aeroshockey.ca

@AerosEdson

The final standings are set in stone in the Provincial Division, along with division semifinal matchups, so the last week of the regular season consists of two more games for each team to make final tweaks to lines and systems.

And, before it becomes all about the team goals and advancing in the playoffs a week from now, there are some significant individual efforts to keep an eye on.

Edson's Sebsastian Heden needs three points to tie/four to break the WSHL record for points in a season (150) and Emil Johansson needs one more goal to tie the league record for goals in a season (75) and two more to own the record outright.

The trio of Heden, Johanson and Kevin Lundin combined for 173 goals and 210 assists for 383 points to go along with 302 penalty minutes.

The Aeros go into the final two games of the regular season having converted on 29.9% of their power play opportunities on the season. With a strong finish in their home-and-home series with Hinton, they could surpass 30%. Edson's team leaders in power play goals are: Johansson (22), Heden (19), Coleman Mueller (10) and Kevin Lundin (8).

The Aeros are a team that is capable of out-scoring most opponents but, if they get into low-scoring battles during the post-season, 20-year-old goaltender Liam Austin ranked sixth among WSHL goaltenders with a .921 save percentage and can keep them in close games.

HINTON WILDCATS (23-17-1-2, 73 pts)

www.hintonwildcats.ca

@HintonWildcats

The Hinton Wildcats should feel pretty good about having home ice advantage for their division semifinal series against Meadow Lake. Hinton boasts a 15-7-0 record at Murray Rec Center in Hinton.

The Wildcats have done a pretty good job at both ends of the rink this year. They have only allowed 96 goals at five-on-five this season and they have a well-balanced offense which is largely driven by their puck-moving defensemen.

Ryland Strauss was one of the most prolific offensive defensemen in the league early in the season, but it appeared the long junior hockey season might be wearing on the 2002-born blue liner. He had seven- and eight-game stretches without a point. He appears to be back on track just in time for the playoffs, however, with points in four of his last five games. That has him up to 35 points (5-30-35) in 39 games for the season.

The Wildcats' top four defensemen: Strauss, Noah Kwasny (16-39-55), Dawson Basnett (5-26-31) and Jacob Delorme (5-20-25 in 31 games) have produced 152 points between them.

Lethbridge native Dalton Eagle Bear notched his second two-goal game as a Wildcat last Saturday against Cold Lake. Eagle Bear has six goals in nine games (6-5-11) since being acquired from the Steamboat Wranglers at the WSHL trade deadline.

MEADOW LAKE MUSTANGS (12-30-1-1, 38 pts)

www.meadowlakemustangs.com

@ML_Mustangs

Andrew Hawes played his first game in a month on Friday and had two goals and two assists in the game. Reintroducing Hawes to their lineup before the playoffs will be a huge boost to the Mustangs. Hawes, a 2000-birthdate player from Kindersley, Saskatchewan, has 18 goals in 15 games on the season.

Scott Danylak made his case for being the Game One playoff starter for the 'Stangs, stopping 41 of 43 shots in a 6-2 win over division semifinal foe Hinton in that game last Friday.

If players like Hawes and Danylak can continue to come up big, Meadow Lake has a chance of advancing past Hinton next week.

The Wildcats-Mustangs series is shaping up to be a good one, with both teams registering recent wins over the other in head-to-head meetings. It could very well be a series that needs a deciding third game.

Meadow Lake will play out the regular season with a home-and-home against Cold Lake this Friday and Saturday, then prepare for the series with the Wildcats which will be played in Hinton March 22-24.

--- Compiled by Scott Harrington for Harrington Sports Media