

2019 THORNE CUP WRAP-UP: DAY 2



The intensity level ratcheted up on the second day of Thorne Cup action in Ogden, Utah with three competitive games. While the host Ogden Mustangs and the El Paso Rhinos have both secured semifinal berths by winning their first two games of the tournament, all six teams are mathematically still alive going into the third and final day of the round robin stage on Thursday. The Mustangs and Rhinos will face off in the late game tonight to determine the #1 seed for Friday's semifinal round.

Oklahoma City 6, Bellingham 4 – Oklahoma City won the Battle of the Blazers, beating Bellingham 6-4, and keeping themselves in the mix for one of the four semifinal spots.

The 11:00 a.m. start made for a quick turnaround for OKC, which played in the late game on Tuesday, and it showed. Bellingham led 2-0 after the first period on goals by Daniel Hebert and Thomas Steven, but Oklahoma City got their legs going and scored five times in the second period to turn the game around.

Oklahoma City scored three times in the first 2:06 of the period, with Vitalii Mikhailov providing two of the lamp-lighters.

Bellingham put Oklahoma City on the power play just :17 into the second period and it took Mikhailov just :13 to make them pay. A point shot by Stephane Doering was stopped by Edward Coffey (40 saves), but Mikhailov was there off the left post to clean up the rebound.

Henrik Overvall tied the game up just over a minute later, on a nice setup from Doering, then Mikhailov gave Oklahoma City the lead with a highlight-reel goal :20 later. The prolific winger attacked the net from a sharp angle through the right circle, cut to the middle of the ice around a Bellingham defenseman, then held onto the puck to draw Coffey out of position before flipping the it into the net. Oklahoma City was in control of the game from that point forward, out-shooting Bellingham 30-13 over the final two periods.

Harri Koll had a goal and two assists in the game for OKC and Xavier Garneau made 17 saves.

Krystof Knapek and Robbie Eichelberger scored the other Bellingham goals while Jamahl Eakett and Timon Prexler each had a pair of assists.

El Paso 4, Long Beach 2 – Just like Bellingham, the Long Beach Bombers had a 2-0 lead in their game, but let it get away as the El Paso Rhinos scored three times to take the lead after two periods and added an empty-net goal in the final minute of the third for a 4-2 win.

Justin-Cole Dubecky scored twice for El Paso. The first one came just :42 after Erik Sillerstrom gave Long Beach a two-goal lead. The second was the empty-netter to put the game away for the Rhinos.

Johan Burman and Martin Dubsky collected two assists each for El Paso and Nils Velm stopped 26 of 28 shots for the Rhinos. Max Kamper and Adam Stalzer scored the other El Paso goals.

Long Beach out-shot El Paso, 12-5, in a scoreless first period but Velm kept the Bombers off the board.

With a 2-0 record, the defending Thorne Cup champion Rhinos have guaranteed themselves a spot in the next stage of the tournament.

Domenic Bosetti made 18 saves for the Bombers who, despite losing their first two games of the tournament, can still qualify for Friday's semifinals with a regulation win over Oklahoma City on Thursday morning.

Ogden 4, Edson 1 – The host Ogden Mustangs punched their ticket for Friday's semifinals with their second win in as many days – this one over the Edson Aeros by a score of 4-1. Artur Ogandzhanyan stopped 29 of 30 shots to backstop the Mustangs to the crucial win.

Bryson Bartell broke the ice late in the first period. Ryan Mascali's shot from the point was blocked by Edson netminder Bronson Sudberry, but the puck popped up in the air and a scramble ensued. It was Bartell who found the puck in traffic and flicked it past a sprawling Sudberry to break the ice with 3:28 left in the opening period. Kerry Kruzel continued his strong tournament, picking up an assist on the play.

Bartell scored twice in Ogden's 4-2 win over Oklahoma City on Tuesday.

The first period ended with the Mustangs leading, 1-0. Ian Currie made it 2-0 Ogden early in the second period, charging over the blue line with the puck and wiring a 40-foot wrist shot in off the post to the right of Sudberry.

Olle Berndtsson got the Aeros on the board before the end of the period, taking a stretch pass as an Edson power play expired, and splitting the Ogden defensemen before finishing with a nice move to his forehand.

The Mustangs carried a 2-1 lead into the third period and everybody in the building knew the next goal would be huge. That goal did not come until midway through the period, but it was Ogden's Rhett Rampinelli who came up with it, finishing off a nice give-and-go with Currie on a two-on-one.

Ogandzhanyan and the Mustangs kept the Aeros at bay until Alex Engan could seal the deal with an empty-net goal with :29 to go.

Sudberry made 36 saves for Edson.

2019 THORNE CUP STANDINGS

regulation wins-regulation losses-OT wins-OT losses (points)

1. Ogden Mustangs 2-0-0-0 (6 points)
2. El Paso Rhinos 2-0-0-0 (6 points)
3. Edson Aeros 1-1-0-0 (3 points)
4. Oklahoma City Blazers 1-1-0-0 (3 points)
5. Long Beach Bombers 0-2-0-0 (0 points)
6. Bellingham Blazers 0-2-0-0 (0 points)

The Top four teams qualify for Friday's semifinals

THURSDAY'S GAMES:

11:00 a.m. Oklahoma City vs. Long Beach – A regulation win gets the Bombers into the semis.

3:00 p.m. Edson vs. Bellingham – Blazers must win in regulation and get some help to stay alive.

7:30 p.m. Ogden vs. El Paso – A marquee match-up to cap off the first stage of the tournament.

TIE-BREAKERS: *If two teams are tied at the end of the round-robin, head-to-head competition at the Thorne Cup is the first tie breaker. If the two teams did not play each other, then the team with the highest ranking entering the Thorne Cup shall advance or take the highest position available. In a three-way tie, teams will be ranked by their pre-tournament seeding (1-Ogden, 2-Edson, 3-Long Beach, 4-El Paso, 5-Bellingham, 6-Oklahoma City).*

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