

WSHL WEEKLY NOTES 10.31.17 – MID-WEST DIVISION



DALLAS SNIPERS (4-8-0, 8pts)
WSHLDallasSnipers.pointstreaksites.com
@DallasSnipers

The Dallas Snipers went into Oklahoma City last weekend with a three-game winning streak and four wins in their last six games. Unfortunately, OKC had won six straight games, and kept it going as Dallas fell in all three games to the Blazers.

Jaroslav Vasicek went 2-1-3 against the Blazers and Alex Hladonik went 1-2-3. Hladonik now leads the Snipers with an impressive 9-13-22 line in the first 12 games of the year.

Veteran goaltender Brady Weiss played in parts of all three games, making 77 saves in all. Weiss played the entirety of Sunday's 5-2 loss, making 39 saves to keep the Snipers in it.

The 25 goals-against at the hands of the Blazers marks the most goals Dallas has allowed in a three-game series all year.

Things don't get any easier for the Snipers as they host Springfield in a three-game set this weekend. This will be the first of three games of the nine-game season series between the two division rivals.

Congratulations to former Sniper and franchise all-time leader in wins, Alex Moustakis, who is leading his college squad at Oakland University with a 6-0-0 record and a 2.00/.928 line to begin his college career.

EL PASO RHINOS (9-0-0, 18pts)

www.EIPasoRhinos.com

@EI_Paso_Rhinos

Two weeks off didn't put any rust on the Rhinos as they took it to Western Division's San Diego Sabers, outscoring them 33-2 in a three-game sweep.

Chaseton Sare was dishing pucks off all weekend, scoring a 1-9-10 line against San Diego, and now leads the team with 7-18-25 in nine games.

El Paso is a franchise that routinely fires on all cylinders and this season is no different, even with major contributions from new players. Austin Simpson (5-13-18) and Carlo Wittor (3-10-13) are two forwards to be getting in on the party early in their WSHL careers, helping El Paso to an undefeated record through nine games.

Even goalie Filip Krasanovsky, fresh from the Czech Republic, is showing he belongs in North America hockey, posting a 1.00 GAA (1st in the league) and a .948 SV% (2nd) to go with his undefeated 5-0-0 record.

The Rhinos face Superior this weekend followed by Mid-Western Division rivals Springfield. Their three-game set with Colorado beginning November 17 is the beginning of the most difficult stretch on the schedule for El Paso...

Congratulations to former Rhino goalie Adam Vay, who became just the fifth Hungarian player to start in an AHL game when he suited up for the Iowa Wild this past week.

Vay posted a 1.76/.936 line on his way to helping El Pas to the Thorne Cup Championship in 2013-14. Vay followed up the following season with a 2.03/.923 line as the Rhinos were Thorne Cup runners-up.

OKLAHOMA CITY BLAZERS (9-0-0, 18pts)

www.OKCityHockey.com

@OKCBlazersWSHL

Oklahoma City has now won their first nine games of the season following a three-game sweep of Dallas over the weekend. The 13-1 victory on Friday saw no less than five Blazers scoring three points with Ivan Bondarenko leading the charge with a 3-2-5 line in the game. Bondarenko ended the three-game set with an 8-3-11 line and now leads OKC, scoring 16-15-31 through his first nine games.

The Blazers outshot the Snipers 123-56 in the series, so there wasn't much work for the backstops, though Bobby Cloutier made 32 saves between Friday and Sunday's matchups making him 5-0-0 on the year.

Former Cheyenne Stampede and new Blazer Lucas Slansky picked up an assist on a third-period tally, giving him a point in his first game with OKC. Slansky also assisted on two more goals Sunday.

Russian native Victor Ekk continues his tear through the WSHL, going 1-4-5 against Dallas giving him 93 points in 82 career games in the league.

OKC remains one of only four undefeated teams in the league, unfortunately one of the others is Mid-Western Division rival El Paso. These two teams battled hard last season to fend each other off, with Springfield working their way into the discussion down the stretch, and it seems they are starting right where they left off this season.

The Blazers are off this weekend, and as a quick glance at their upcoming schedule shows, they'll face off with the likes of Dallas, Cheyenne, and Wichita before meeting El Paso mid-December. Springfield may prove to a worthy adversary, but chances are, OKC and El Paso will be fighting to hand each other a first loss.

SPRINGFIELD EXPRESS (5-2-2, 12 pts)

www.SpringfieldExpress.com

@_ExpressHockey

The Springfield Express made some waves over the weekend, taking two of three from Colorado just two weeks after getting swept by the Jr. Eagles.

The 417s are now 2-2-2 against a team many predicted (read: me) to be one of the top contenders for the Thorne Cup this season, with half the games being decided by one goal.

Tempers flared in the second and third periods of Sunday's game, with the two teams amassing 163 PIMs between them on the day and 259 over the weekend.

Stephane Doering proved to be the difference in Sunday's 4-2 win, scoring back-to-back in the second period and assisting on the insurance goal in the third. Doering now leads the team with an 8-8-16 line through nine games.

Eight Express skaters have double-digit point totals, and while captain Michael Polito is still looking for the back of the net, he does lead the team with 12 assists.

"Every shift, we worked," Polito said on the team's Facebook page. "Nobody quit. Bruises and tears didn't stop us. We're a brotherhood that looks out for one another. Express bought in this weekend and the boys left proud winning the series."

Springfield takes on Dallas this weekend before taking on the first place El Paso Rhinos in two weeks. With two of the WSHL's four undefeated teams in their division, the Express will look to put a dent into a few teams before the holidays.

WICHITA JR. THUNDER (1-14-0, 2pts)

www.WichitaJuniorThunder.com

@JrThunderHockey

Wichita was off this past weekend and won't see the ice for another three weeks when they face off with Springfield November 17.

The Jr. Thunder have just one win in their first 15 games to start the year. There's plenty of time to catch up, and coach Rob Weingartner has said all along that his players will have some work, with so many new faces on the roster.

"We had so many returning players last year," coach Weingartner said at the beginning of the season. "This led to a good understanding of our systems and playing for each other. With the core group aged out, we only have a half-dozen returners."

Right now, Tyler Alverson leads the team with a 3-4-7 line in his first nine games in the WSHL. Braedon Thomas (4-2-6, 18 PIMs) and David Zarycki (1-5-6, 33 PIMS) are also among the team leaders in points. All three players are rookies.

The Jr. Thunder are in the league's top three in penalty minutes, leading the Mid-Western Division with 327 through 15 games.

--- *Tyler Whidden for Harrington Sports Media*