

WSHL WEEKLY NOTES 11.01.17 – MOUNTAIN DIVISION



CASPER COYOTES (3-8-0, 6 pts)

www.caspercoyotes.com

@CasperCoyotes

The Casper Coyotes took on the undefeated Idaho IceCats of the Northwest Division last weekned, losing all three games to a perennial contender in the Western States Hockey League

Romaeo D'Intino posted a 1-1-2 line on the weekend and Jacob Elik added two assists.

D'Intino (4-6-10) and Elik (1-8-9) lead the team in points and Lucas Ossachuk leads the team with a .906 SV% in net.

The Coyotes have allowed 45 goals in their last two series and have a rematch with Utah this weekend – two weeks after Utah scored 23 goals in three games against Casper.

Things got testy on Saturday with both teams amassing 98 total penalty minutes – 35 from Casper players. D'Intino's strike on Saturday was a powerplay goal, but Idaho was able to get three goals of their own with the man-advantage

Casper will face off with Utah this weekend. Playing in arguably the toughest division in the league means that the wins won't be easy to come by, so a better showing against the Outliers will go a long way to keeping Casper in contention this season.

The Coyote's Facebook page posts lots of photos of their games and events held with youth players.

CHEYENNE STAMPEDE (2-10-0, 4pts)

www.cheyennestampede.com

@StampsHockey

The Cheyenne Stampede kept busy during their bye week, hosting their annual Stampede Pancake Fundraiser over the weekend. The event included Stampede players handing out pancakes to members of the community – raising money for the team.

Twelve games into the year things have gotten off to a rough start for Cheyenne. But, with a breather before taking on Colorado this weekend, it could be an opportune time for the squad to make some noise after the quarter mark of the season.

Damon Theara leads the team with a 1-6-7 line and Evgeni Bastrakov leads Cheyenne with five goals.

They'll see a lot of Casper in the upcoming months, so that rivalry will continue to be strong come playoff time. Look for those two teams to battle it out for playoff positioning all year.

COLORADO JR. EAGLES (11-3-2, 24 pts)

www.coloradojunioreagles.com

@COJrEagles

The Colorado Jr. Eagles have played Springfield of the Mid-Western Division six times over the last two weeks, losing twice, and are now 4-2-0 against the Express with two of their wins coming in overtime.

Their early-season play has Colorado is looking like a top contender for the Thorne Cup this season. Head Coach Steve Haddon says his team is already playing in mid-season form.

"The biggest reason I feel we have had early success is I have guys battling and paying the price in October like it's April," Haddon said. "When you have players buying in that early and playing playoff hockey, it sets the bar high for everyone else too."

Veterans Carter Dahl (11-10-21) and Vincent Mastrandrea (8-11-19) continue to lead the team, and John Tower "of Power" (3-10-13 in 11 games) is leading one of the leagues' deepest blue lines.

With 49 PIMs, Sean McMahon (5-11-16) leads a Colorado team that has amassed the third-most PIMs (368) in the WSHL.

With a dozen players scoring double-digit points, and the team allowing only 35 goals through 16 games, Colorado is proving to be one of the league's toughest wins.

"We are a 200-foot hockey team," Haddon said. "We take pride in all three zones and when you have everyone contributing like that, it shows the commitment to the 200-foot game."

Colorado has a two-game set with Cheyenne this weekend before a one-off with Superior the following Saturday. That should get them rested and ready before their big three-game series with El Paso in mid-November – a series that could cement the Jr. Eagles' place among the league's best teams...or knock them out of that conversation.

OGDEN MUSTANGS (12-4-0, 24pts)

www.ogdenmustangs.com

@OgdenMustangs

The Ogden Mustangs split their home-and-home with cross-state rivals Utah with the home team taking the victory in each game.

After Ross Bartlett's two goals led the Mustangs to a 4-0 win over the Outliers on Friday, it was Utah that took over on Saturday scoring first, then not giving the Mustangs a lead in beating Ogden 3-1.

The Mustangs-Outliers season series has been a good one so far, as the rivals have split their four games with two of the games being decided by one goal.

Matus Spodniak (24-27-51), Bartlett (19-22-41), and Jacob Laurin (12-28-40) are 1-2-3 in the WSHL scoring race, and goalie Jonathan Chin is among the league leaders with eight wins so far to go along with a respectable 2.36/.894 slash line.

The Mustangs' +91 goal differential leads the league, and their 129 goals are 44 more than the second-highest scoring team (Long Beach, 85).

They're a high-powered offense, and with dates coming up with Northwest Division powerhouses Idaho and Lake Tahoe – not to mention a few more with Utah – the Mustangs are going to need to rely on their goal scoring to stay atop the league's toughest division.

SUPERIOR ROUGHRIDERS (10-6-0, 20pts)

www.SuperiorRoughRiders.com

@SPR_RoughRiders

The Superior RoughRiders continue to show grit, sweeping the Western Division's Phoenix Knights in three one-goal games including two in overtime.

Sure, the Knights are winless, but in order to be good in this league, teams have to win the close games and they don't get much closer for Superior than the series with Phoenix.

The RoughRiders staved off a late-game rally by Phoenix in Friday's game to win 5-4, led by Dylan Steele's two goals.

Jason Kelly scored in overtime to give Superior the victory on Saturday, and Chase Taleghani won Sunday's game just over a minute into the first overtime.

Nikita Sheberov leads the team with a 21-15-36 line, good for top-four in the league.

Superior is getting it done with many new players including Sheberov and guys like Thore Weyrauch (10-14-24) and Daniel Benilov (5-9-14) each of whom have gotten plenty of press this season. But with contributions by players like Erik Bauschmann (2-9-11) on defense and Austin Tautfest (1-1-2

against Phoenix), the RoughRiders could soon see their team chemistry gelling even more leading to them jumping up in the Mountain Division standings.

Next up for the Riders is the Mid-Western Division El Paso Rhinos who sit in first place in their division. A series win against a solid team like El Paso will go a long way to putting a target on Superior's back as they nudge their way into the conversation as the league's top contenders.

UTAH OUTLIERS (9-4-0, 18pts)

www.UtahOutliers.com

@UtahOutliers

The Utah Outliers continue to prove they belong in the Mountain Division conversation, once again splitting a two-game series with one of the league's top teams in Ogden.

The home-and-home split with the Mustangs means the Outliers now have a 2-2-0 record against their in-state rivals, and Utah has yet to lose a series this season.

Rookie defenseman Zack Hoffman continues to lead the team with an impressive 8-15-23 line in 12 games from the blue line.

The Outliers have allowed a measly 2.08 goals against while scoring at a 4.77 goals-per-game clip through 13 games.

Goaltenders Otto Saxin and Dawson Rodin are each posting a .947 SV% for the Outliers. Rodin is in the WSHL's top-five in minutes played for goalies, and of the league's top-20 in goalies' minutes played, Rodin's 1.75/.948 line by far tops the rest of the league.

Last season, when Utah made their miraculous mid-season run, it was the arrival of goaltender Marcus Rudhage that proved to be the spark. In Rodin this season, it seems the Outliers have their man in the crease to lead them to the promised land.

Their schedule favors them, and with a few matches against Ogden sprinkled in, don't be surprised if Utah is able to mix dominant wins with strong showings against strong teams to get them confident and ready come playoff time.

--- *Tyler Whidden for Harrington Sports Media*