

WSHL WEEKLY NOTES 11.08.17 – MOUNTAIN DIVISION



CASPER COYOTES (3-11-0, 6pts)

www.caspercoyotes.com

@CasperCoyotes

The Casper Coyotes were swept by their Mountain Division rivals, the Utah Outliers, over the weekend scoring only two goals in the three games. Of their 11 losses this season, only one saw Casper score more than one goal – a 6-4 loss to Superior in the second game of the season.

Bradley Green's goal on Sunday gave him seven on the year, leading the Coyotes in that category (7-2-9).

Jacob Elik (1-9-10) added an assist on Saturday, giving him a team leading nine on the season.

Romaeo D'Intino's assist on Saturday has him leading the team in points with a 4-7-11 line.

All three Casper goalies, Dylan Ossachuk, Luka Sotlar, and Nolan Kare, saw time against the Outliers with Sotlar seeing the most time in net. Sotlar continues a solid season in his first year in North America, and his 69 saves in less than two complete games against Utah is evidence of that.

Casper has a week off and could very easily be close to turning on a switch that makes them a tough out in the league's toughest division. When they come back, they'll be facing off with Mountain Division rival Ogden with a shot to reboot their season.

CHEYENNE STAMPEDE (2-12-0, 4pts)

www.cheyennestampede.com

@StampsHockey

The Stampede are bringing back bubble hockey!

During the first intermission of their home games in Cheyenne, fans will be able to partake in a bubble hockey tournament for prizes. This isn't your dad's bubble hockey, usually found in the gum-stickied floors of ice rink game rooms. In Cheyenne's version of bubble hockey, participants insert themselves in the large bubble tubes and run around the rink, in a full-contact game.

The Stampede will take on Oklahoma City this weekend in Cheyenne's annual Military Appreciation Weekend Series. The team will be honoring all military personnel including

special ticket prices for military families and will auction off their special game-worn jerseys.

More information can be found on the Stampede's Facebook page.

COLORADO EAGLES (13-3-2, 28pts)

www.coloradojunioreagles.com

@COJrEagles

The Colorado Jr. Eagles continue to soar in the Mountain Division after a two-game sweep of Cheyenne.

The Jr. Eagles' 13 wins puts them third in the WSHL for victories, and they currently sit just two points back of first-place Ogden in the division standings.

Denver native, defenseman Anders Saarela, is enjoying his first full season in the WSHL. He scored four goals and 11 points last weekend against Cheyenne, including a hat trick and playmaker in Friday's game. Saarela is now third on the Jr. Eagles' with 19 points (9-10-19) on the season.

No fewer than 17 Colorado skaters have accumulated double-digit points this season, led by veteran Carter Dahl (14-12-26). Newcomers like Chris Calabrese (2-3-5 in five games) and John Campbell (3-1-4 in six games) are at a near point-per-game clip since joining the team.

Deep scoring, excellent defense, and they're second in the league with 374 PIMs means the Jr. Eagles are effective in both ends of the rink and also hard to play against. They are hitting on all cylinders.

"I believe it has been a mix of everything from top to bottom with our group," said head coach Steve Haddon of his team's success. "We want to be as versatile as we can be throughout the season."

It is that versatility that has them favored to come out of the Mountain Division on top, but after a one-off with Superior this weekend, a three-game set with the Mid-Western Division's best team in El Paso will be a solid barometer for Colorado.

"El Paso will be a great test for us," Haddon said. "We are excited for the opportunity."

OGDEN MUSTANGS (15-4-0, 30pts)

www.ogdenmustangs.com

@OgdenMustangs

Head Coach Jake Laime's Mustangs sit in first place in the league's toughest division, but it's shaky ground with Colorado hot on their tails and the early season emergence of Utah.

They've won 12 of their last 13, and lead the league in goals scored (148) and goal differential (+100) but, in their three-game sweep of Northwest Division leader Tahoe, the Mustangs also showed they won't be pushed around.

Laime says he doesn't want his team to be one-dimensional. "Wins are wins, but we are still trying to piece together 60 minutes of hockey," Laime said. "We have proven that we can play in the offensive zone, but we haven't really done much on the defensive side of the puck."

Matus Spodniak (28-34-62), Jacob Laurin (16-31-47), and Ross Bartlett (19-25-44) lead the league in points through 19

games and are being buoyed by one of the WSHL's deepest roster.

"We NEED to bring a blue-collar work ethic to the ice, and learn that we will not always be rewarded for taking shifts off and making the wrong decisions," Laime said. "We aren't a fighting team and we never will be. I want a more disciplined culture here and I want us to be tough to play against."

And tough to play against they are, and they're only adding talent to get even better.

"We brought in Tyson Liverance from West Sound, who we hope will add some depth on our D end as well as Daniel Pavlicko from Aberdeen in the NAHL in net," Laime said of some of his new players. "It's a long process that we will continue to build and work towards a roster that we feel can be competitive down the stretch."

SUPERIOR ROUGHRIDERS (10-9-0, 20pts)

www.SuperiorRoughRiders.com

@SPR_RoughRiders

Superior fell to the hands of the Mid-Western Division's undefeated El Paso Rhinos in three straight games over the weekend. Much like their current record, the RoughRiders' season has been ups and down. Their upcoming schedule is Mountain Division heavy, so they'll either play themselves into the mix or out of it.

Nikita Sheberov scored two of the team's four goals over the weekend, and now leads the RoughRiders with a 23-15-38 line.

Thore Wyrach's 17 assist leads the team giving him a 10-17-27 line after his first 19 games in the league.

Superior has three one-offs with rivals Colorado to close this month, sandwiching a two-game series with Cheyenne, so not a lot of opportunity to put together a string of victories and build momentum through the mid-way of the season.

The three games against the Jr. Eagles in the upcoming weeks will be the RoughRiders first against their Mountain Division in-state rivals. Colorado is rolling deep, but Superior could just as easily find themselves in an upswing during those games and there's plenty of time for surprises.

UTAH OUTLIERS (12-4-0, 24pts)

www.UtahOutliers.com

@UtahOutliers

After sweeping Casper over the weekend, the Outliers now have won 11 of their last 12, putting them in in third place in the Mountain Division, with games in hand on the teams above them (Ogden & Colorado) and directly under them (Superior).

Utah now has 24 points after just 16 games to start the year. Last season, the Outliers didn't get above 24 points in the standings until after the New Year and 28 games

The difference last year was the arrival of goalie Marcus Rudhage at the quarter mark of the season. This year, the fast start can also be attributed to goaltending.

Canadian rookie Dawson Rodin is firmly among the league's best goalies, posting a 1.67/.948 line while being among the

league leaders in minutes played. Only El Paso's Filip Krasanovsky has a better GAA (1.13).

Otto Saxin has been stellar in a backup role as well, posting a 0.67/.958 line and getting five wins.

"Our goaltending has been a big key to our success so far this season," said head coach Paul Taylor. "Rodin and Otto have been steady all year, and you can tell our team has a lot of confidence in them."

Defenseman Zack Hoffman (10-17-27) leads the team in points. After going 3-1-4 against Casper, rookie Gianni Vitali has a 4-15-19 line, tying him with vet Jacob Wanstrom (2-17-19) for second on the team.

Utah's next two series are against Southern Oregon and Tahoe who currently sit in last and first place respectively in the Northwest Division. After that, it's Ogden in a two-game set that will give the Outliers a chance to show they're the new kids on top.

"We have two out-of-division series coming up with Southern Oregon and Tahoe," Taylor said of the team's chances to jump up in the division. "After that, we will face Ogden again at the end of the month. If we play well in those next seven games we will have a chance to climb in the standings."

And with so many newcomers on the Outliers leading them, this could be the way things are for seasons to come.

--- *Tyler Whidden for Harrington Sports Media*