

WSHL WEEKLY NOTES 11.15.17 – MID-WESTERN DIVISION



DALLAS SNIPERS (4-11-0, 8pts)
WSHLDallasSnipers.pointstreaksites.com
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While their record may not show it, the Dallas Snipers have proven to be a tough win for opponents. Led by forwards Alex Hildonik (10-17-27) and Sterling Cooper (11-15-26), the Snipers haven't been shut out since their first game, and are a team that still competes in the third game of a series where the first two games were decisive losses.

Exhibit A: their last series against Springfield. The Express beat the Snipers, 10-3, in the first two games, but each contest was close for the first two periods. In Game Three on Sunday of that weekend tilt, Dallas didn't bow down, leading by two goals heading into the third period before ultimately losing, 8-7.

Head Coach Aaron Davis knows his team must learn to play a full game for them to turn things around.

"The light will turn on when we learn how to play 60 minutes," Davis said of his team finding a feel for the season. "Every game the past weekend (against Springfield) was tight after the second period and then we ended up not showing up. I know we have a young team and it takes understanding and time. Once we learn how to play a complete game we will be in much better shape."

Coming off a bye week, the Snipers will face off with the Blazers in Oklahoma City. These two teams met at the end of last month and, while the Blazers won handily in the Friday game, the Snipers refuse to quit in the subsequent two games.

Coach Davis said his team has the skill, and there are players contributing, and he likes what he sees so far.

"Hladonik has been a great addition as well as our newest player Danil Trenikhin (4-1-5 in 6 games)," Davis said. "Both players show great smarts and work ethic every night. Returning guys Sterling Cooper and Jaroslav Vasicek (7-13-20) have been great for us thus far as well."

After the series with the Blazers, it's another week off for Dallas before they play Wichita, then head to the holiday break. This may give Dallas time to sort it out and start the new year ready to snipe.

EL PASO RHINOS (15-0-0, 30pts)

www.EIPasoRhinos.com

[@EI_Paso_Rhinos](https://twitter.com/EI_Paso_Rhinos)

Austin Simpson and Timothy Hefner each scored hat tricks in Friday's 11-1 win over Springfield this past weekend. Playmaker Chaseton Sare was up to his old tricks, leading the Rhinos with four points.

Friday's game proved to be the most lopsided of the three, as El Paso swept the pesky Express, following up Friday's blowout with a 5-2 win on Saturday and a narrow 1-0 victory on Sunday.

Goaltender Filip Krasanovsky played all three games, allowing only three goals. Krasanovsky now leads the league with 11 wins while putting up ridiculous percentages (1.09/.941).

Sare added three more points on Saturday, giving him seven on the weekend. He now leads the Rhinos with a 12-25-37 line after 14 games.

El Paso now has five players that have scored 20 points or more, and the team has a +91 goal differential on the year, and sole possession of first place in the Mid-Western Division.

Head Coach Cory Hermann sees room for improvement for his squad.

"We need to improve on making smarter decisions with the puck," Hermann said. "Our focus is always on out-working our opponent, we are a blue-collar team so every night we need to outwork our opponent to have any sort of success."

The biggest test of El Paso's season will come this weekend when they play the Mountain Division's Colorado Jr. Eagles in Fort Collins. Both teams carry the weight of being pre-season favorites and each have earned 30 points in their respective divisions. This series definitely one to watch and is sure to be an important measuring stick for both clubs as we reach the quarter pole of the season.

OKLAHOMA CITY BLAZERS (12-0-0, 24pts)

www.OKCityHockey.com

@OKCBlazersWSHL

Seven different Blazers scored in Friday's 10-1 win over Cheyenne, with Justin Arnold and Connor Dunn scoring two apiece. Things came to blows in the end of both the second and third periods, but the Blazers came away with the victory while Cheyenne continues its slide.

Tempers didn't cease much in Saturday's game when both teams combined for a total of 66 PIMs. The weekend total was 164 total minutes in penalties between the two teams.

Playing in just his second series with OKC, former Stampede skater Lukas Slansky scored a 1-6-7 line against his former team bringing his season total 1-9-10 in just six games.

Firing on all cylinders, the Blazers now lead the Mid-Western Division with an astonishing 111 goals scored in just 12 games and remain within striking distance of first-place El Paso, which has played three more games than OKC.

The Blazers have also allowed the fewest goals in the division with just 16 goals-against in 12 games.

Oklahoma City plays no fewer than 15 games before the new year, meaning they will have a more than decent chance of making some ground on the Rhinos come 2018.

OKC faces off with Dallas this weekend, the first of nine straight games at home. All signs point to the Blazers being able to make up some ground on El Paso, now it's up to them to follow through.

SPRINGFIELD EXPRESS (8-5-2, 18pts)

www.SpringfieldExpress.com

@_ExpressHockey

After finishing on the wrong end of a lopsided score in Friday's game, Springfield battled hard Saturday and Sunday.

Vegard Faret scored his seventh goal of the year – Springfield's lone tally on Friday. The former Casper Coyote now has a 7-9-16 line in 15 games playing for his old coach.

Losing 11-1 didn't slow down the Express, hanging tough on Saturday only to be bested by three straight Rhino goals in the third period.

Goaltender Chad Purdy made 40 saves in Sunday's 1-0 loss.

While Stephane Doering leads the team with a 12-13-25 line, the Ledenkov Twins are still tied in points with Arkip putting up 11-12-23, and Filimon adding 6-17-23. The two brothers have been tied in points all season.

The 417s have Wichita this weekend before a trip to El Paso for a rematch against the Rhinos. Then, it's a six-game series with the Blazers of Oklahoma City, meaning if the Express can garner as many points out of the possible 24, it will go a long way to helping them gain some ground on the Blazers and Rhinos in the standings.

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

www.WichitaJuniorThunder.com

@JrThunderHockey

The Thunder have won just one game in their first 15, and haven't played in what seems like ages. They'll get back to it this weekend when they face off with Mid-Western Division rivals Springfield who are coming off a three-game sweep at the hands of El Paso.

Even though they haven't played in weeks, Wichita is still among the league leaders in penalties with 327 total PIMs.

Six Thunder skaters have more than 20 PIMs, led by John Lebar's 46.

David Zarycki's 1-5-6 line has him tied for second on the team in points, and his 33 PIMs are good for third.

The last time the Jr. Thunder faced off with Springfield, the Express rolled for a 31-3 goal differential in the three-game sweep. We'll see if their long break has helped Wichita gain some composure when the two teams face off again Friday.

--- Tyler Whidden for Harrington Sports Media