

# WSHL WEEKLY NOTES 11.23.17 – NORTHWEST DIVISION



**BELLINGHAM BLAZERS (6-11-3, 15 pts)**

[www.BellinghamBlazers.pointstreaksites.com](http://www.BellinghamBlazers.pointstreaksites.com)

**@Bhamblazers**

The Bellingham Blazers are still searching for ways to win. The club was swept by Tahoe in three games last weekend despite being on the doorstep of victory each time out.

The Blazers held a lead in all three games against the Icemen. Friday and Saturday's contests were decided by one goal, while Sunday's matchup was a two-goal contest.

"Even with the three losses I felt we had opportunities to take control of the games and just weren't able to," said Bellingham Head Coach Mark Collins.

Collins feels that his team is on the verge of competing, but currently it is not where it needs to be.

"There is something missing in our locker room where we can't compete for a full 60 minutes," he continued. "We are very close, though, and once we can get over this hurdle, I think we will continue to move forward as the season progresses."

On Thanksgiving Eve, the Blazers made significant progress in a 7-3 victory over Seattle in what was the team's final game in the month of November.

The seven goals scored were a big step for a Bellingham squad that has struggled on the offensive end throughout the season. Plus, the Blazers were able to pull themselves within one point of Seattle in the Northwest Division standings.

Bellingham's next game will come on December 2 in West Sound. It will be followed by another game against Seattle on the road the following night.

**IDAHO ICECATS (15-0-0, 18 pts)**

[www.IdaholceCats.com](http://www.IdaholceCats.com)

The Idaho IceCats kept on rolling with another sweep, this time over Southern Oregon. The IceCats outscored the Spartans by a 23-2 margin over the course of the three-game set in what was one of their most one-sided series of the season.

Idaho has outscored its opponents 73-5 over its last nine games in a run of dominance that has become commonplace for the club over the past several years.

On the season, the IceCats have a plus-92 goal differential, the fourth-best in the WSHL only behind Ogden and a pair of undefeated teams, El Paso and Oklahoma City.

Idaho's trio of dominant goaltenders has combined to allow a league-low 18 goals, putting them close to averaging one goal against per game.

Tyler Matthews (1.60/.935) and Shaun Brown (1.00/.945) are tied for the most time on ice, while Jacob Hough (0.50/.969) is not far behind while leading the WSHL in both goals-against average and save percentage.

Head coach and general manager John Olver and his staff have outdone themselves in recruiting this dominant group of goaltenders. The saying goes

that defense wins championships, and if that holds true during the playoffs this spring, other teams will be hard pressed to take down the IceCats.

Idaho's next game will come next weekend against Ogden. It's a big series for both clubs, as Ogden currently leads the Mountain Division and figures to be a difficult matchup for the IceCats.

### **SEATTLE TOTEMS (7-8-2, 16 pts)**

[www.SeattleJrTotems.com](http://www.SeattleJrTotems.com)

**@SeattleJrTotems**

The Seattle Totems finally snapped their eight-game drought with an exciting 7-6 victory over West Sound last weekend.

Unfortunately, the Totems ran out of gas in the second of the two games as they were blown out, 11-2.

Still, getting that elusive win was huge for the Totems players. It had been over a month since the club defeated the Warriors 3-1 back on October 14 during their 6-0-1 start, and getting back into the win column must have been a huge weight lifted off of their collective shoulders.

Seattle has had the most success this season with Garrett Wills in between the pipes, even though the 20-year-old is not the best goalie on the Totems' roster statistically.

Wills, who hails from Burnaby, British Columbia, owns a 5-2-2 record while posting a 4.93 goals-against average to go along with a .868 save percentage. The lefty has earned the decision in seven of the nine games in which the Totems have earned points in this year.

Seattle has just one game this week, a Thursday night matchup at home against Bellingham. After that it will return to the ice on December 1 for another contest against West Sound.

### **SOUTHERN OREGON SPARTANS (2-19-0, 4 pts)**

[www.SOSpartans.com](http://www.SOSpartans.com)

**@wshlspartans**

The Southern Oregon Spartans were overmatched last weekend against Idaho, and the result was a three-game sweep that saw the Spartans net just two goals.

Southern Oregon has now lost eight in a row over a difficult stretch that has included series against Utah and the undefeated IceCats.

Jacob Mecir is leading the Spartans with 12 points (2-10-12) over 17 appearances. He picked up an assist against Idaho to become the first player on the roster with double-digit helpers.

Meanwhile, Joel Holmberg has found the back of the net a team-leading seven times and has a scoring line of 7-2-9. He logged a two-goal outing a couple of weeks ago against Utah.

The Spartans will look to pick up some much-needed points this weekend in a three-game series at home against West Sound.

If Southern Oregon wants to pull itself back into the thick of things in the division anytime soon, the series against the Warriors would be the time to do it. Another three-game set with Idaho looms next weekend.

### **TAHOE ICEMEN (13-8-3, 29 pts)**

[www.Tahoelcemen.com](http://www.Tahoelcemen.com)

**@Tahoelcemen**

Heading into the weekend, the Tahoe Icemen were reeling, having lost five of their last six games. Their fortunes improved, though, as they swept Bellingham in three games.

Each game in the series was competitive, but the Icemen found a way to win and picked up six valuable points to push themselves back to within one point of first place.

Tahoe owns a perfect 6-0-0 mark against Bellingham. This series was much closer than the last, which saw the Icemen net 20 goals in a three-game set.

After a bye this weekend, Tahoe will enter one of its most difficult six-game stretches of the year. Things will kick off next weekend with a three-game series against Utah, a team that was quietly one of the better clubs last season and that has emerged this year by winning 15 of its first 19 games.

Then, Tahoe will be tasked with another three-game set against undefeated-Idaho the following weekend. The Icemen made the IceCats work hard the last time the two clubs met but were ultimately swept while failing to pick up a point.

If Tahoe wants to have any chance at the division crown, winning both series would go a long way toward not only gaining points, but proving to itself and the rest of the league that it is a true Thorne Cup contender.

**WEST SOUND WARRIORS (9-10-0, 18 pts)**

[www.WestSoundWarriors.com](http://www.WestSoundWarriors.com)

**@WS\_Warriors**

The West Sound Warriors split a two-game set with Seattle last weekend, dropping the opening contest in a 7-6 heartbreaker before winning in an 11-2 blowout the next day.

Several Warriors had career outings in the nine-goal victory. Harri Kroll scored four times, while Connor Wherrett added a hat trick and Erik Safstrom and Samuel Pelech dished out five assists apiece.

Safstrom (12-16-28) overtook Kroll (18-9-27) for the team lead in points during the series. Kroll still holds a sizeable lead in the goal department, and the two forwards are the only players on the West Sound roster who have netted double-digit goals.

The Warriors will have plenty of chances to make up some ground in the Northwest Division in the coming weeks.

After taking on last-place Southern Oregon this weekend in a three-game set that begins on Black Friday, they will play a single-game matchup against Seattle before battling Bellingham in a home-and-home series.

In the week before the WSHL Showcase, the Warriors will play two more games against Seattle and Bellingham to close out their regular first-half schedule.

Southern Oregon, Seattle, and Bellingham represent the bottom three teams in the division. If West Sound can take care of business in the coming weeks, it will draw itself closer to Tahoe and Idaho at the top of the division while separating itself from the rest of the pack.

*--- Jared Tennant for Harrington Sports Media*