



*Photo: On the Edge*

## **WSHL WEEKLY NOTES 09.26.17 – MOUNTAIN DIVISION**

### **CASPER COYOTES (0-0-0, 0pts)**

The new-look Coyotes will be sporting quite a few new faces this season, including a new bench boss in David “Smoke” Cole who coached the Southern Oregon Spartans to a 33-15-4 record last season in the Northwest Division.

Casper will also be skating three rookie goalies including Luka Sotlar, who had been manning the creases in the Slovenian junior leagues the past four seasons, including putting up a 2.11/.932 line last season.

To help the team transition to the upcoming season, they’ve added some local talent to the squad. Defenseman Hunter Brown, forward Will Chapman, forward Logan Spiegelberg, and WSHL vet Dallen Neese are all Casper natives, with Brown, Chapman, and Neese having developed with the Casper Oilers.

Cole brought some of his former Spartan players including Neese who put up 10 points in 39 games last season and defenseman A.J. Holenski who sported a 1-2-3 line in 26 games last season.

For more information and a look at their new jerseys, visit [CasperCoyotes.com](http://CasperCoyotes.com) and follow them on Twitter at [@CasperCoyotes](https://twitter.com/CasperCoyotes).

### **CHEYENNE STAMPEDE (0-2-0, 0pts)**

This past weekend was a test for the Cheyenne Stampede, who faced division rivals Superior in a home-and-home series. Unfortunately, Cheyenne failed the test, being outscored 17-0 by the RoughRiders.

Robbie Brennan made 19 saves in just one period of work, while goalie Devin Bain made a solid 27 saves on 30 shots in relief.

With so many new players, the Stamps will be depending on veterans like local kid Alec Sara who has amassed a 8-28-36 line in 78 career games played and is looking to have a breakout season for Cheyenne.

Cheyene will be playing another home-and-home with Colorado who has been off to a fast start in the Mountain Division.

For more information, you can visit [CheyenneStampede.com](http://CheyenneStampede.com) or follow them on Twitter at @StampsHockey. You can also visit the Stamps' Facebook page for photos from the weekend.

### **COLORADO EAGLES (1-1-1, 3 pts)**

The Colorado Jr. Eagles return key players from last year's squad like starting goaltender Braden Lajoie (2.21/.928), leading scorer Vincent Mastrandrea (29-48-77), forward Carter Dahl (24-27-51) and the Tower of Power defenseman John Tower (16-22-38 in 38 games), which has made them one of our favorites to win the Thorne Cup.

Coach Steve Haddon sees the franchise's success continuing this year thanks to his core of players. "We have a good core of players who have been to two Thorne Cup finals," Haddon said. "They will all take turns leading that's how you win: by Committee."

To have a chance at the Cup, Colorado will have to go through reigning Mountain Division champs and general pain-in-Colorado's-butt Ogden who took two of three games in their series last weekend including a shootout victory on Friday.

These two teams have been neck-and-neck the past four seasons, and this year doesn't look to be much different. But, with them not playing each other again until the end of the year, this was an important (and telling) three-game tilt for the division rivals.

After both were held off the scoresheet on Friday, Tower assisted on both of Dahl's goals Saturday in the 8-2 loss.

Losing the first two games got Colorado going Sunday, scoring five first period goals in the 7-6 victory that saw seven different Eagles score goals and Sean McMahon passing for three helpers.

"I feel we have built a team that will have a better start than last season," coach Haddon said. "Every season we want to grow and try and set the bar higher. That's why you play the games, and the games will show what we have built here in Northern Colorado."

The Eagles will play a home-and-home with Cheyenne and will look to make a statement within the division that they are ready to be kings of the Mountain.

"The Organization is ready to make that next step," Haddon added. "The group we have this season will have lots of tests with how tough the Mountain Division is."

For more information, visit <http://coloradojunioreagles.pointstreaksites.com/view/junioreagles> and follow them on Twitter at @COJrEagles

### **OGDEN MUSTANGS (2-1-0, 4 pts)**

Ogden opened their season with a statement series against Colorado who have consistently been the bee in the Mustangs' bonnet.

Swedish forward Jacob Laurin scored two goals in his first WSHL game. Both goals were assisted by vets Matt McClelland (36-45-81 in 129 career GP with Wichita) and Matus Spodniak (66-76-142 in 102 career GP with Ogden).

The team exploded for an 8-2 victory on Saturday led by rookie Ian Currie's 2-2-4 line and former OKC Blazer Ross Bartlett's 1-4-5 line.

After falling behind 6-1 on Sunday, Ogden was able to fight back, but still took the 7-6 loss.

"Friday was very sloppy, but I saw lots of promise offensively," said Ogden head coach Jake Laime. "Saturday's game we played much better structurally and were rewarded with little time spent in our defensive zone. On Sunday we came out flat. No urgency. Complete disregard in the defensive zone. We did show some resiliency battling back."

Bartlett led scorers with a 3-5-8 line over three games, and goalie Jonathan Chin made 81 saves over all three games on the weekend.

Ogden will host Utah this weekend for a two-game set.

For more information, visit [OgdenMustangs.com](http://OgdenMustangs.com) and follow them on Twitter at [@OgdenMustangs](https://twitter.com/OgdenMustangs).

### **SUPERIOR ROUGHRIDERS (2-0-0, 4pts)**

Superior made things rough for Cheyenne this weekend, outscoring their division rivals 17-0 in two games for the weekend sweep against the Stampede.

Russian sniper Nikita Sheberov scored a 6-2-8 line in his first taste of North American hockey, and fellow rookie Daniel Benilov added a 3-3-6 line from the blue line.

Last week, coach Paul DePuydt praised players like Benilov (Lithuania) and forward Thore Weyrauch (Germany) and defenseman Erik Bushmann (Germany) who are making their North American debuts after representing their respective countries in IIHF play. Those players followed up with Weyrauch (2-1-3) and Bushmann (0-1-1) adding on to fellow rookie Benilov's success against Cheyenne.

Rookie backstops Manny Hertel-Bauman (33 saves) and Colorado-born LJ Newell (28 saves) each got the shutout this weekend.

There are a lot of new faces on the Riders squad this year, and if they can continue this type of success, Superior may be able to inject themselves in the Mountain Division conversation.

They'll continue their season against division rivals Casper who will be hosting the three game set for their season opener.

For more information, you can visit [SuperiorRoughRiders.com](http://SuperiorRoughRiders.com) and follow them on Twitter at [@SPR\\_RoughRiders](https://twitter.com/SPR_RoughRiders).

### **UTAH OUTLIERS (0-0-0, 0pts)**

After making an incredible run last season that saw the Outliers claw their way out of the division cellar and into the conversation as one of the league's best teams, returning head coach Paul Taylor hopes to see more of the same in this Utah squad.

"I would like to think we will another strong team this season," Taylor said. "We had a slow start last year but we're able to pick it up and I thought we got really hot from December on. This season we have six returners so I am hoping they can help lead the way and we can have some carry over from last season. But in saying that, it is primarily a new group and a new season."

The Outliers return six players this season including Bogdan Khvatov (22-27-49 last season) and Jacob Wanstrom (17-20-37), and Coach Taylor sees big things coming from his vets particularly Wanstrom.

"I think our fans from last season will see a stronger and more skilled player this season (in Wanstrom)," Taylo said. "He has a high hockey IQ and I expect a few nice plays to come from him that may turn some heads."

With some new energy coming in the form of new players to the team, Utah are looking to be in mid-season form in September. "We have a lot of good new players this season that I'm excited about," said Taylor. "I expect some mature play from Brandon Krumpschmid and Zack Hoffman. Both these players have solid junior hockey experience and I expect both to be big contributors for us."

The Outliers will get tested early as they travel to Ogden for a season opening series against the Mustangs. Utah's home opener will be October 13 against the Spartans of Southern Oregon.

For more information, you may visit [UtahOutliers.com](http://UtahOutliers.com) and follow them on Twitter at [@UtahOutliers](https://twitter.com/UtahOutliers).

--- Tyler Whidden for Harrington Sports Media