



WSHL WEEKLY NOTES 09.27.17 – MID-WEST DIVISION

DALLAS SNIPERS (0-0-0, 0pts)

www.WSHLDallasSnipers.pointstreaksites.com

@DallasSnipers

Last week, coach Aaron Davis spoke of his young team's leadership role being taken by four-year vet and local kid Sterling Cooper who has amassed a 25-30-55 line in 105 games played over the course of the past three seasons.

"Cooper will be our captain this season he has earned it the last few seasons," Davis said. "His work ethic and determination every single game/practice is unreal. We have a lot of young players this season and if they watch and learn from him they will have successful hockey careers."

Ironwood Yoopers teammates Vern Ray (16-10-26 in 42 GP) and Trevor Borlace (8-7-15 in 16 GP) have come from the USP3HL to Dallas to help Cooper and the Snipers make some waves this season.

Also new to the team is Swedish forward Simon Birkehorn who scored a 24-50-74 line in 61 games playing in Sweden's under-18 leagues.

The Snipers will open their season in two weeks against El Paso which will be a test for this young team.

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

www.ElPasoRhinos.com

@El_Paso_Rhinos

While awaiting their season opener next weekend against Dallas, the Rhinos have been staying busy within their community.

Well known for their work within El Paso, the Rhino players continue to provide pride for their community, taking part in a local high school's homecoming parade, hosting youth hockey camps, and hosting their annual Fall Shootout.

Even their mascot, Spike the Rhino, gets involved as he joined the players for the National Alliance on Mental Illness walk in El Paso, bringing awareness to mental illness and those who suffer with mental illnesses.

They even used their twitter (@El_Paso_Rhinos) to help promote World Rhino Day this past September 22, working to support rhino conservation efforts.

The El Paso hockey team will try not to go extinct this season, and all indications from years past suggest the Mid-Western Division is theirs for the taking.

OKLAHOMA CITY BLAZERS (3-0-0, 6pts)

www.OKCityHockey.com

@OKCBlazersWSHL

And, that's how you do that.

The Oklahoma City Blazers came into the season with hopes of separating themselves in the league's toughest division with a slew of new players who coach Gary Gill was confident would help pace the team to the top.

"Zach Colgrove, Cody Wardner, Josh Chamberlain are just a few guys that me and the coaching staff are excited to see," Gill said last week. "Colgrove, Griffin Wiencek, Ivan Bondarenko, Victor Ekk are all very explosive and very very focused on this season."

And focused they all were this past weekend as the Blazers opened their season against the reigning Thorne Cup champion Wichita, sweeping the Thunder by outscoring them 34-6 in three games.

Wiencek, who played 13 games with OKC last season, scored a 2-7-9 line on the weekend including playmakers on Friday and Sunday's games.

Last season's leading scorer for the Blazers, Ivan Bondarenko, got off to a hot start scoring 4-10-14 against Wichita.

Tempers flared on Sunday after a weekend of beat downs on the scoresheet, with the two division rivals combining for 132 PIM after just 30 on Friday and 36 on Saturday.

The Blazers started three different goalies, Patrick Wiens, Bobby Cloutier, and Timothy Henning, who all got a "W" to begin their seasons.

The Blazers travel to Tulsa next weekend where they'll look to keep the fire going.

SPRINGFIELD EXPRESS (0-0-0, 0pts)

www.SpringfieldExpress.com

@_ExpressHockey

Springfield opens their season this weekend against the Thorne Cup champion Wichita Jr. Thunder.

It will be a real test for the 417s as they're not only playing the league champion, but their playing the league champion a week after getting blown out. So, with an angry Thunder team, the Express will have to be on their toes and ready for a competitive weekend with their division rivals.

The team will have to lean on newcomers like the Ledenkov twins (Filimon & Arkhip) who combined for a 26-45-71 line playing in Belarus' junior leagues. The young guns will join the likes of Austrian Marcel Hack (5-18-23 in 46GP) who captained the Phoenix Knights last year, and '99 defenseman Tyler Kupka

who has already played 81 games over the course of three seasons in the WSHL, scoring a 2-4-6 line to go with 70 PIM.

New coach John Ambrefe will have his work cut out for him in what was the league's toughest division last year, and it begins with Wichita on Friday.

WICHITA JR. THUNDER (0-3-0, 0pts)

www.WichitaJuniorThunder.com

@JrThunderHockey

Well, that didn't go well.

Looking to defend their Thorne Cup championship, the Jr. Thunder fell in three straight games to division rival OKC, losing in lopsided fashion after being outscored 34-6 to the Blazers.

The offense just couldn't get anything going against a stout OKC defense with only Simon Sefcik (2-1-3) and Martin Trudman (1-1-2) generating multiple points over the weekend.

Special teams seemed to be a difference maker, with OKC scoring 11 power play goals to zero scored for Wichita including an 0-7 effort on Sunday.

This is sort of a rebuilding year for the Thunder as coach Rob Weingartner mentioned last week. "With the core group aged out, we only have a half-dozen returning players," he said. "Most notably being Simon Sefcik (3-8-11 in 11 GP last year) and Martin Trudman (6-11-17 in 19 GP) who just returned from their time in the NAHL."

So far, those two have been living up to expectations, but we expect coach Weingartner's team to turn things around much like they did last season.

Wichita will continue to test the division as they visit Springfield to take on the Express in their home opener this weekend.