



WSHL WEEKLY NOTES 09.28.17 – NORTHWEST DIVISION

BELLINGHAM BLAZERS (0-0-0)

@Bhamblazers

The Bellingham Blazers open their season this weekend with a home-and-home series against the Seattle Totems.

The Blazers begin on the road and then have their home opener at Bellingham Sportsplex on Saturday night.

Bellingham General Manager and Head Coach Mark Collins is confident in his club's ability to compete in the Northwest Division.

"I expect to win every game and that is the way we need to approach it," he said. "We will be in a tough spot as there are some great teams here, but we are looking forward to getting the season started."

Collins has been impressed with his team's offseason work and is excited for the upcoming season.

"We had a couple good weeks of practice and preseason games. I look forward to seeing if our talented group will be able to handle the adversity.

"Our strength will be our speed in transition, but we'll see how we execute."

Bellingham will play its first four games of the season against Seattle. It will not take on another opponent until its October 13 matchup against West Sound.

Click here to learn more about the Blazers' team history.

<http://bellinghamblazers.pointstreaksites.com/view/bellinghamblazers/team-73/team-history-22>

IDAHO ICECATS (0-0-0)

The Idaho IceCats will not open the regular season until October 13 when they begin a three-game series at home against Tahoe.

The extended offseason gives the club plenty of extra rest following a run to the Thorne Cup championship game last spring.

Idaho is bringing back several players from last year's roster, including forward Lance Herning. The second-year player piled up 70 points (32-38-70) over 48 regular-season games last year and contributed a scoring line of 2-8-10 over nine postseason appearances.

Herning is primed for another strong campaign and will provide plenty of offensive firepower for head coach Mark Olver and his staff.

This weekend, the IceCats will play their Black and Silver Game at Manchester Ice and Events Center in McCall, Idaho.

The intrasquad scrimmage gives Idaho's new players a chance to experience WSHL action at full-speed and allows IceCats fans to watch their team live before the regular season begins.

Idaho's relatively easy October schedule will give it plenty of time to adjust to the new season. The IceCats play only 10 games in their first month of action, including a pair of three-game sets against division rivals Tahoe and West Sound.

Click here to browse the IceCats' website, which has a new look for the 2017-18 season.

<http://www.idahoicecats.com/>

SEATTLE TOTEMS (1-0-1)

@SeattleJrTotems

The Seattle Totems are off to a solid start after earning three of four possible points in their series against West Sound last weekend.

The Totems fell in overtime in the opening game before pulling off a 3-2 win in a nailbiter on Saturday night.

Forward Tom Ignatovich enjoyed a four-point series with a pair of goals and two assists. Through two games, the Seattle native has already netted half of the goals he scored all of last season when he found the back of the net four times.

Second-year forward Cam Gross (1-1-2) and Michael Shippee (2-1-3) also had productive series against the Warriors.

The duo of Gross and Shippee combined for 78 points (28-50-78) last season. Seeing both players perform well early on bodes well for Totems fans.

The Totems will get back to work this weekend with a home-and-home series against Bellingham beginning on Friday night at Olympicview Arena.

Click here to see the Totems' locker room before their season opener against West Sound.

https://twitter.com/SeattleJrTotems?ref_src=twsrc%5Egoogle%7Ctwcamp%5Eserp%7Ctwgr%5Eauthor

SOUTHERN OREGON SPARTANS (1-2-0)

@wshlspartans

The Southern Oregon Spartans got off to a rough start after dropping their first two games of the season to Tahoe.

The Spartans were able to salvage a pair of points in the third and final game of the Tahoe series with a 5-4 win in double overtime.

Newly signed netminder Krystof Holub played the majority of the games against the Icemen. The Czech Republic native stopped 61 of the 71 shots he faced, good for an .860 save percentage.

Holub earned the win in the Spartans' lone victory against Tahoe, moving his record to 1-1-0.

Rookie forward Christian Ward didn't take long to make a big impression on his new club as he scored a team-high three goals against Tahoe.

Ward had a line of 27-22-49 last year with the Missoula Junior Bruins of the NA3HL. If he can translate his offensive success to the WSHL, it could go a long way towards making up for the loss of star forwards Chris and Cameron Seto from last season's edition of the Spartans.

The Spartans are off this week, giving head coach Dennis Creighton plenty of time to prepare for a three-game series against West Sound next weekend.

Southern Oregon was scheduled to face the Kent Ravens this weekend, but Kent recently made the decision to cease operations for the 2017-18 season.

Click here to follow the Spartans on Facebook.

<https://www.facebook.com/southernoregonspartans/>

TAHOE ICEMEN (2-0-1)

@Tahoelcemen

The Tahoe Icemen are playing great hockey right out of the gate after taking two of three from Southern Oregon last weekend.

Goaltender Wade Conlan is a huge part of the impressive start. The veteran netminder allowed just one goal on 37 shots against the Spartans – a .973 save percentage.

Newly acquired forward Paul Frys has already made a noticeable impact on the Icemen as he posted a line of 4-5-9 against the Spartans.

Frys seems to be ready for another strong year offensively. The former Vancouver Rangers captain has a chance to reach 200 career points this season.

Just two seasons ago, the Icemen were the worst team in the league in the league with a record of 2-50-0.

The club enjoyed a bounce-back season a year ago with a playoff series win and now seems primed to make a big leap in the Northwest Division this season.

The improvement is a huge testament to general manager and head coach Mickey Lang, who has turned the franchise around following his hiring prior to the 2016-17 season.

Click here to view a list of notable Icemen alumni.

<http://tahoeicemen.com/alumni/>

WEST SOUND WARRIORS (1-1-0)

@WS_Warriors

The West Sound Warriors won their first WSHL game against the Seattle Totems by a score of 5-4 in overtime.

Forward Harri Koll found the back of the net early in the second period, making him the first player to score a goal for the Warriors in the WSHL.

Alec Johnson scored a pair of goals and added an assist in the contest, including the game-winning goal in overtime.

The Warriors played hard in their second game against the Totems but ultimately fell 3-2.

West Sound has the weekend off, allowing head coach Ty Smith to make some adjustments as his club prepares for a three-game series against Southern Oregon next weekend.

The matchup against Southern Oregon should be very winnable for the Warriors. The Spartans are off to a rough start this season after finishing in second place in the Northwest Division last year.

Click here to follow the Warriors on Facebook.

<https://www.facebook.com/WestSoundWarriorsHockeyClub/>

--- Jared Tennant for Harrington Sports Media