



WSHL WEEKLY NOTES 10.03.17 – MOUNTAIN DIVISION

CASPER COYOTES (0-2-0, 0pts)

@CasperCoyotes

Bradley Green scored the Casper Coyotes' lone goal, with assists by Cameron Cross and Dallen Neese, in their season-opening 5-1 loss to division rivals Superior.

Slovenian goalie Luka Sotlar faced 43 shots in losing his first taste of North American hockey.

The second game of the weekend started much the way the first game did, with Superior jumping out to an early first period lead.

Casper hung in there Saturday scoring three goals in two minutes in the third period, including Romaeo D'Intino and Brindamour Beard scoring just 18 seconds apart, but it wasn't enough and the Coyotes fell to the RoughRiders 6-4.

Beard (1-2-3 on the weekend) is one of many former Southern Oregon players to join former coach David Cole in Casper.

Ontario-native Dylan Ossachuk made 32 saves Saturday in his first WSHL game action.

Sunday's game was cancelled due to a rink malfunction. Hopefully that gets squared away as Casper opens their season with nine home games (make that eight).

Thorne Cup champion Wichita Jr. Thunder roll into Casper this weekend for a three-game set.

CHEYENNE STAMPEDE (0-4-0, 0pts)

@StampsHockey

The Stampede dropped two more games this weekend – this time to Colorado – failing to score in any of their first four games of the year.

Some unfortunate circumstances had the team making a coaching change mid-week with Joe Liquori now taking the reins in Cheyenne.

Rookie goalie Robbie Brennan, one of the few bright spots thus far, faced 82 Jr. Eagle shots this weekend and has been getting the biggest workload in net this season.

The Stamps will travel to Wichita for a three-game set against the defending Thorne Cup champs, followed by a trip to Ogden, so things aren't going to get much easier for Cheyenne in the coming weeks.

But with the coaching situation settled, and the team's new players still adjusting to each other, there's plenty of time for Cheyenne to pull it together.

Photos of their series with Colorado, check out Cheyenne's facebook page: @StampedeHockey.

COLORADO EAGLES (3-1-1, 7pts)
@COJrEagles

The Colorado Jr. Eagles swept a two-game home-and-home series with Cheyenne.

The Jr. Eagles outshot the Stampede 67-17 on Friday, and goaltender Hunter Bancroft posted the shutout. Nine Eagle skaters scored in the first game with Michael Petrotto leading the way with a pair.

Saturday was more of the same for Colorado, with vets Vincent Mastrandrea and Carter Dahl scoring two goals apiece leading a night when five players scored multiple points. Bancroft netted his second straight shutout on Saturday.

With a number of returning players, and their depth, Colorado is going to be a force in the WSHL this season.

And, much like last season, it's not just two or three players shining in the early going, it's a whole team contributing to the Eagles' success.

Five games in, the team has ten players scoring a point-per-game. Along with local rookie goalie Bancroft joining seasoned WSHL vet Braden Lajoie in net, this Eagles team is going to soar.

Colorado hosts division rivals Utah this weekend for the first meeting between the two teams.

OGDEN MUSTANGS (3-2-0, 6pts)
@OgdenMustangs

Ogden is finding the early going in the Mountain Division to be a bit different than last season when they got off to a hot start while other teams stumbled out of the gate. The Mountain is quickly separating itself from the rest of the league, making an argument that it is the toughest division in the WSHL.

This past weekend was evidence of how difficult it may be to find wins in the season as the Mustangs played two one-goal games with Utah, going 1-1 in the series.

Former OKC Blazer Ross Bartlett continues to adjust well to his new home, scoring a 2-2-4 line in Friday's 6-5 win over the Outliers. Bartlett also added an assist in Saturday's 3-2 loss, bringing his season total to a lofty 5-8-13 line in just five games.

In his third season with the Mustangs, forward Matus Spodniak continues his nearly 1.50 career point-per-game pace with a 3-6-9 line in the first five games this year.

Though the games were both won with a one goal difference, Ogden outshot Utah by nearly 2-1 with 100 shots on net to Utah's 57 in the two games.

The early-season tests will continue for the Mustangs as they travel to Colorado to visit Superior for a three-game series this weekend.

SUPERIOR ROUGHRIDERS (4-0-0, 8pts)

@SPR_RoughRiders

The RoughRiders continued their strong to the season with their second straight two-game sweep, this time at Casper.

Now the only undefeated team in the Mountain Division, coach Paul DePuydt sees his team of newcomers beginning to adjust.

"I think our guys are showing signs of starting to gel," Coach DePuydt said. "It is a big change for several of the guys that have never played in North America."

Nikita Sheberov and German-born Thore Weyrauch opened the weekend with a 2-2-4 line each in Friday's game, and defenseman Daniel Benilov added two assists.

Sheberov repeated his 2-2-4 line on Saturday with Weyrauch adding two more assists to his season total.

Rookie goalies Marshall Murphy and Manny Hertel-Bauman combined for 69 saves on the weekend, and the Riders have only allowed five goals in their first four games of the year.

Coach DePuydt knows that his team's hot start is only the beginning in a division with so much competition.

"I think the Mountain Division is the strongest division in the WSHL," DePuydt said. "You are expected to bring your best on a nightly basis, as any team can beat another. It is great for competition and development of our players."

This weekend will be a big test for the Riders with perennial Mountain leaders Ogden coming to Colorado for a three-game set.

UTAH OUTLIERS (1-1-0, 2 pts)

Last season saw the Outliers have a difficult time finding their groove in the early going, then after some shrewd player additions, Utah got white hot and put together a string of games that had them in the conversation as one of the better teams in the WSHL heading into the post-season.

So far, the Outliers are in mid-season form, going 1-1-0 against perennial division champs Ogden in two one-goal games that seem to have established Utah as a team to be reckoned with this year.

Brandon Krumpschmid went 3-1-4 in his first two games in the WSHL, his hat trick on Saturday accounting for all of Utah's goals in the win.

Though they were outshot nearly 2-1 on the weekend (57-100), the Outliers proved to be difficult to put away after coming back from a 5-2 deficit on Friday to make it a game by the end.

Defenseman Zach Hoffman scored a 1-3-4 line in his first taste of WSHL action and fellow rookie, and Grand Rapids, MI native, Gianni Vitali dropped three assists over the weekend.

Utah travels to Fort Collins, CO to take on the Colorado Jr. Eagles this weekend to test whether or not they're truly ready for prime time in the early going. With Colorado one of our early favorites to win the Thorne Cup, this could be the weekend Utah does what they did mid-season last year and insert themselves in the conversation.

--- *Tyler Whidden for Harrington Sports Media*