

WSHL WEEKLY NOTES 10.19.17 – NORTHWEST DIVISION



BELLINGHAM BLAZERS (1-3-1)

www.BellinghamBlazers.pointstreaksites.com

@Bhamblazers

The Bellingham Blazers finally got into the win column last weekend in their fifth game of the season with a big 10-5 victory over West Sound.

The Blazers' offense had been solid leading up to the 10-goal outburst, averaging four goals per contest.

Forward Jamahl Eakett led the way with a four-point showing that was capped off with a hat trick in the third period.

Eakett's nine goals are the most on the club by a sizeable margin. Thomas Steven and Ruslan Novruzov have netted four goals apiece.

The Blazers are back in action this weekend with a three-game series in Tahoe against the Icemen.

Bellingham trails Tahoe by five points in the division standings, so a strong series could put a dent in that deficit or even erase it altogether.

The Blazers will follow up this weekend's games with a home-and-home series against West Sound on October 28-29.

IDAHO ICECATS (3-0-0)
www.IdahoIceCats.com

After an offseason that lasted all the way into mid-October, the Idaho IceCats finally opened last week with a three-game sweep of visiting Tahoe.

The games throughout the series were fairly close, and the first contest was about as competitive as you'll find. It took a goal from Idaho forward Roman Tintera with just six seconds remaining in regulation for the IceCats to squeak out a 5-4 win.

Still, a win is worth two points no matter how you get them, and Idaho is in a good position early on as it sits just two points out of second place with multiple games in hand on every division opponent.

Forward Lance Hering has scored seven goals over three games. That's a tough pace to maintain, but if Hering can continue to find the back of the net consistently, he will make plenty of noise in the league scoring race.

Idaho is facing off against West Sound this weekend on the road. It will be the first matchup between the IceCats and the Warriors, who joined the WSHL this past offseason.

Looking ahead, the IceCats are slated to take on Casper on the road in a couple weeks. Although the Coyotes are off to a mediocre start, it should be a good series between two of the perennial contenders in the WSHL.

SEATTLE TOTEMS (6-0-1)
www.SeattleJrTotems.com
@SeattleJrTotems

It appears as though the Seattle Totems, winners of six straight, have turned a corner. Through their first seven games, the club is undefeated in regulation.

Unlike last season, the Totems are finding ways to win close games. All seven of Seattle's games up to this point have been decided by two goals or fewer.

Last weekend, Seattle played only one game and found a way to win, beating West Sound by a 3-1 margin.

The reward for Seattle's solid play over the past few weeks is a spot all alone at the top of the Northwest Division. The Totems have a five-point cushion over West Sound and Tahoe, which are locked into a second-place tie.

Forward Tom Ignatovich has been red hot this season, lighting the lamp 10 times, which makes him one of the league's top-10 goal-scorers.

With just three more points, Ignatovich (10-5-15) will surpass his scoring line from all of last season (4-14-18). He has already scored more goals than he did last year.

Not to be outdone, forward Michael Shippee, another returnee from last season's edition of the Totems, is leading the club with a scoring line of 5-14-19.

Shippee has collected multiple points in five of seven games and has scored four or more points on three separate occasions.

SOUTHERN OREGON SPARTANS (1-8-0)

www.SOSpartans.com

@wshlspartans

The Southern Oregon Spartans were swept by Utah last weekend and find themselves at the bottom of the Northwest Division.

For all the improvement that the division has seen through the first month of play, it seems the Spartans have taken a step back from last season's team that finished in second place. Simply put, the Spartans' defense and goaltending has not been good enough to give the club a chance to win.

Southern Oregon is allowing nearly six goals per contest, and neither of its netminders have a save percentage near .900.

But the blame cannot be solely placed on the team's defensive corps, as the offense has netted just over two goals per game.

The good news is that it's still October. The Spartans have plenty of time to find their way and get back to being a competitive team.

Southern Oregon hosts Ogden this weekend for a what will be a tough series against the Mustangs.

TAHOE ICEMEN (3-4-2)

www.Tahoelcemen.com

@Tahoelcemen

The Tahoe Icemen dropped under .500 after they were swept by Idaho, but put in a competitive showing in the series.

The Icemen have faced some of the league's best teams over the past couple of weeks with series against Ontario and Idaho. Although they didn't pick up as many points as they would have liked, Tahoe showed it can hang with the best.

At this point, simply believing in yourself could go a long way toward contending in a division that seems to be up for grabs. That's why, despite having a rough stretch as far as wins and losses go, these past two weeks could be important to how the Icemen view themselves as a team for the rest of the season.

Tahoe is currently tied for second in the division standings, five points out of first place.

The Icemen could potentially push themselves toward the top spot in the division this weekend when they take on Bellingham. First-place Seattle does not play this week, giving Tahoe a huge opportunity to take hold of the division.

WEST SOUND WARRIORS (4-3-0)

www.WestSoundWarriors.com

@WS_Warriors

The West Sound Warriors suffered a pair of setbacks last week in games against Bellingham and Seattle.

The losses come following a strong start that saw the Warriors claim eight of 10 possible points through their first five games.

West Sound is in second place with a 4-3-0 record, but its goal differential is worse than every other second-place team in the league.

On a positive note, the Warriors will play six of their next seven games at home, giving many home fans their first look at Northwest Division rivals.

This weekend, West Sound will match up with one of the best teams the league has to offer in Idaho. The Warriors' performance this week will likely show how close they are to contention in the WSHL.

Luckily, West Sound will have its fans cheering it on at Bremerton Ice Arena. The support will be needed as the club takes on the franchise that has claimed five of the last seven Thorne Cups.

--- Jared Tennan