

WSHL WEEKLY NOTES 10.27.17 – WESTERN DIVISION



Mark Mauno photo

FRESNO MONSTERS (6-6-0)
@WSHLMonsters
www.FresnoMonsters.com

Last week's three-game sweep of Phoenix pushed the Fresno Monsters' record to .500. With the sweep, the Monsters have now won six of their last seven games.

Fresno Head Coach Kevin Kaminski is encouraged by his team's improved play.

"I feel that we have a full line-up now, and guys can eat up some ice time," said Kaminski. "We've been getting contributions from everybody whether it's on defense or offense.

"I thought that last game versus Phoenix was finally a full 60-minute effort, as the nights before we came out of the gates slow. It's a process that these guys are learning on how to be consistent for 60 minutes."

Kaminski thought getting all six possible points against the Knights was important as the Monsters head into a three-week hiatus.

"It was nice to win all three games before going into an 18-day layover, which will hopefully let us get healthy and recharge our batteries."

One of the most impressive parts of this Monsters season has been the play of starting goaltender Adam Barvik, who has dominated his way to a 1.98/.935 slash line.

"Adam Barvik is a legit number one goalie, he is very confident and calm in net and has great rebound control," said Kaminski.

"He loves to compete and win and makes the big save when you need it."

Barvik and his teammates will return to action November 9-11 for a three-game series against Bellingham at home.

LONG BEACH BOMBERS (12-0-0)
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www.JrBombers.pointstreaksites.com

The Long Beach Bombers are showing the rest of the Western Division they're still the team to beat.

The Bombers have rattled off 12 straight wins to open the season, including three in a row over San Diego last weekend.

Long Beach's goaltending has been the best in the WSHL, with all three goalies owning spectacular save percentages. Matthew Ayres (.927) is statistically the worst goalie on the roster due to the play of Rhett Arnold (.959) and veteran Domenic Bosetti (.944).

It's no surprise that the Bombers have held the opposition to a division-low 19 goals, meaning they give up an average of less than two goals per contest.

Only three teams have allowed less goals than Long Beach, and all three have played significantly less games than the Bombers.

Long Beach will take on Valencia on Friday night in one of the most anticipated games of the first half, which will be followed by a game against Ontario on Saturday evening.

Unfortunately, the Long Beach and Valencia will only play a one-game matchup this weekend. The two clubs will meet again three times between November 2-9, and again on November 18.

ONTARIO AVALANCHE (5-5-1)

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The Ontario Avalanche put up a good fight against Valencia last weekend but ultimately dropped both contests in the two-game set.

The Avalanche took a one-goal lead three separate times in the second game, but Valencia tied things up each time and snuck one past goaltender Connor Duffy 40 seconds into overtime for a 4-3 Flyers win.

Ontario has played much better than its .500 mark would indicate. The past two weeks, the Avs have taken on El Paso and Valencia, two clubs that have combined for a record of 16-1-0.

After dropping the first game to El Paso 5-1, each of Ontario's next four games were narrow 4-3 losses.

Unfortunately, one-goal defeats don't count for much in the standings, and as a result the Avalanche have dropped to fourth place in the Western Division.

Ontario's brutal stretch will continue this weekend with a game Friday night against Long Beach.

The Avs' entire month of November consists of games against Long Beach and Valencia, the top two teams in the division.

It's almost unfair to give one team such a difficult schedule, but Ontario's schedule in December and for the second half of the season will get significantly easier.

PHOENIX KNIGHTS (0-12-0)

@PhoenixKnightsJrA

www.PhoenixKnightsHockey.com

Once again, the Phoenix Knights were competitive early on before their opponent pulled away late in the game. That was the case in almost every game last weekend as Phoenix was swept by Fresno.

The Knights out-shot the Monsters 52-28 in the first game of the series last Thursday and held leads of 2-1 and 3-2.

If Phoenix can figure out a way to put together a full 60-minute effort, the wins will come. The Knights have shown they can compete with most WSHL teams, but a complete game will be needed in order to get into the win column.

Forward Anthony Masanotti netted his team-leading sixth goal of the season against the Monsters.

The rookie, who's 6-1-7 line is the best on the team, has been a source of offense for a club that is in desperate need of it.

The Knights travel to Superior this weekend for a three-game series against the RoughRiders.

Superior is off to a decent start this year with a 7-6-0 record, but this is certainly a series in which Phoenix could pick up its first victory of the season.

SAN DIEGO SABERS (1-8-0)

@sdsabershockey

www.SanDiegoSabersHockey.com

When you play two of your first three series against Long Beach, the results will most likely not be all that encouraging.

The San Diego Sabers have learned that they hard way through the first month, going 1-2-0 in a three-game set against Fresno but dropping all six games to Long Beach.

Nine of the Sabers' next 12 games will be on the road. They will not be able to enjoy an extended homestand until a 12-game stretch at home from that will span over parts of two months, beginning in November.

The Sabers will be tested again this weekend as they travel to El Paso to take on the Rhinos, who have won six straight games to open the year.

After the El Paso series, San Diego will play its next six games against winless Phoenix before taking on Valencia in mid-November.

VALENCIA FLYERS (10-1-0)

@valenciaflyers

www.ValenciaFlyers.com

It looks as though the Valencia Flyers have already begun their annual season-long battle with Long Beach for the Western Division crown.

The Flyers have won 10 of 11 games to open the season and trail the division-leading Bombers by four points following a pair of close wins over Ontario last week.

Valencia's 81 goals are the second-most of any WSHL team. It has been terrorizing opposing netminders to the tune of over seven goals per game.

Forward Jakob Kranabetter is leading the effort with a scoring line of 8-24-32. He has recorded multiple points in nine of his ten appearances.

Meanwhile, Dawson Keay is still leading the club with 11 goals. The Alberta native has 66 goals over parts of five years with the Flyers and is on pace to have his best season yet.

Keay (11-10-21) has a career line of 67-80-147. With over forty games left in the regular season, 200 points seems entirely possible assuming he can stay healthy.

Over the next couple of weeks, the Flyers will face off against Long Beach four times, including a two-game set on the road this weekend.

Depending on the result of Long Beach's game against Ontario this weekend, winning both games could push the Flyers into a first-place tie with the Bombers.

--- Jared Tennant for Harrington Sports Media