

## 2018 THORNE CUP PREVIEW: IDAHO ICECATS



Photo provided by: Mark Mauno

### **IDAHO ICECATS**

Head coach: John Olver

44-4-3, 1st place - Northwest Division

Won Northwest Division playoffs

### **HOW THEY GOT HERE**

Earned a first-round bye

Defeated West Sound Warriors, 2 games to 0, in Northwest Division Semifinals  
Defeated Tahoe Icemen, 2 games to 0, in Northwest Division Final

### **THORNE CUP SCHEDULE**

Wednesday April 11; 2:00 pm vs. Oklahoma City Blazers

Thursday April 12; 10:00 am vs. Utah Outliers

Friday April 13; 10:00 am vs. Long Beach Bombers

### **AGAINST THE FIELD (7-3-1)**

vs. El Paso 1-0-0; 3-2 win at showcase

vs. OKC 0-1-0; 2-1 loss at showcase

vs. Ogden 3-2-1;

vs. Utah 3-0-0;

*Did not play Long Beach*

### **THORNE CUP HISTORY**

The Idaho franchise has played in the final game of the Western States Hockey League season every year since 2011. They won it all in 2011, 2012, 2013, 2015 and 2016. They lost the championship game to El Paso in 2014 and Wichita last season.

### **OUTLOOK**

Nobody has more experience bringing a team to the Thorne Cup Finals than Idaho IceCats head coach John Olver. The Idaho franchise is making their eighth appearance and Olver has guided five teams to the championship, winning in every format including the one they will use this year.

And despite all of the (well-deserved) talk about El Paso's dominant regular season performance, let's not forget that the IceCats only lost four games in regulation - an impressive feat in itself.

Olver will be able to draw on his experience to prepare his team, beginning with their round-robin opener is against the Oklahoma City Blazers - one of the teams that managed to beat them this year. OKC topped them, 2-1, at the Western States Shootout.

Olver used both of his goaltenders in the division playoffs and, needing to play five games in five days to win this tournament, we can expect to see both Jacob Hough late-season addition Victor Ojdal between the pipes in El Paso.

After what was a rocky first half by their lofty standards, the IceCats cruised to the Northwest Division title with an astounding 22-0-2 record after the holiday break.

The IceCats were dominant on special teams, finishing third in the WSHL in both power play (29.1%) and penalty kill (87.5%), but they also trailed El Paso and Oklahoma City in both categories. That's just another example of how the bar is raised at this tournament.

Idaho is going into battle prepared, however, with balanced and deep group of scorers led by F Lance Herning (44-36-80) and followed by F Matthew Kindred (21-33-54), F Jacob Hedencrona (21-32-53), F Alexander Piliya (14-35-49), F Kevin Fellows (16-32-48) and power play QB D Terry Ryder (11-44-55).

*--- Scott Harrington/Harrington Sports Media*