

WSHL WEEKLY NOTES 12.11.18 – MID-WESTERN DIVISION



WSHL standings are expressed W-L-OTW-OTL (“W” and “L” represent regulation wins and losses; shootouts are included in overtime results). Three points are awarded for a regulation win, two for an overtime win and one for an overtime loss.

DALLAS SNIPERS (8-9-1-0, 26 pts.)

@DallasSnipers

The Dallas Snipers didn’t get the results they were looking for last weekend as they were swept in a three-game series by El Paso.

The Rhinos posted wins of 10-3 and 8-1 in the first two games, but the Snipers fought hard in the final contest. They ended up coming up a little bit short, falling by a score of 6-4.

“There were some encouraging signs in the final game against El Paso,” said Snipers Head Coach Aaron Davis. “I thought we stayed with it and it was a good back-and-forth game.”

With the WSHL Showcase quickly approaching, the Snipers will play their final series of the first half when they welcome Wichita to Dr. Pepper Stay Center this weekend.

The Jr. Thunder are in last place in the division, but they have picked up their play as of late, outside of a three-game sweep at the hands of Oklahoma City last weekend.

Wichita had won four of six heading into the OKC series, so it has definitely shown improvement after a nightmare start.

“I think Wichita will present more of a challenge now,” Davis said. “They are a hard-working team.”

After this weekend’s series, Dallas is set to take on the CPJHL Red Team, the West Sound Admirals, and the Valencia Flyers at the Western States Shootout from December 18 to 20.

EL PASO RHINOS (15-5-2-2, 51 pts.)

@El_Paso_Rhinos

With victories in each of their last four games, the El Paso Rhinos have pushed within two points of the top spot in the division.

The Rhinos had a chance to take over first place a couple of weeks ago, but they dropped two of three to Oklahoma City on the road in a heavyweight matchup.

El Paso will do some traveling this weekend, playing a pair of road games against the Valencia Flyers, before stopping in Ontario to play the Avalanche on their way to the Western States Shootout.

Valencia and Ontario represent the bottom two teams in the Western Division with a combined record of 10-26-0-3. The road trip will provide the Rhinos a chance to pick up some additional points before heading into their difficult slate of games at the WSHL Showcase in Las Vegas against the Edson Aeros, Ogden Mustangs, and Bellingham Blazers.

All three of El Paso’s opponents at the event are leading their respective divisions. The Rhinos have been one of the most successful clubs in WSHL history, so they’re no stranger to taking on the best the league has to offer at the annual showcase.

NORTHERN COLORADO EAGLES (12-10-0-2, 38 pts.)

@NoCoEagles

Against a talented Utah Outliers club, the Northern Colorado Eagles won two of three games on the road over the weekend.

The series showed just how evenly matched the Outliers and Eagles are. After Northern Colorado claimed a 2-1 victory in the opening contest and Utah logged a 4-0 shutout win the following night, the Eagles closed out the series with a 4-1 win on the back of a 38-save performance from goaltender Marshall Murphy.

Forward Mark Revniaga has recently taken over the role of Northern Colorado's leading scorer with 11 goals and 14 assists in 21 games, good for 25 points. The Israeli is three points ahead of veteran Nikita Sheberov (11-11-22).

The Eagles' season has been defined by close, competitive games and a difficult schedule. They are scoring only 3.6 goals per contest while giving up an average of 3.2 goals.

Northern Colorado will play host to Oklahoma City this weekend at Greeley Ice Haus. The Blazers swept the Eagles in mid-October, but two of those wins were back-and-forth games that could have gone either way.

OKLAHOMA CITY BLAZERS (17-3-1-0, 53 pts.) @OKCBlazersWSHL

The Mid-Western Division leaders from OKC continue to impress week in and week out. The Oklahoma City Blazers posted three consecutive wins over Wichita last weekend following a couple of hard-fought recent series against Ogden and El Paso.

The Blazers are using the same formula that has led to WSHL dominance for numerous teams in years past—a deep collection of talented offensive players combined with a goaltending corps that can stifle any opponent in the league.

Vitali Mikhailov is still leading the pack with a 23-23-46 scoring line, followed by Stephane Doering (15-19-34), Jordan Srgo (10-21-31), and Dominic Loubert (5-23-28).

Overall, the Blazers have nine players who have registered double-digit points, including seven forwards with 20-plus points.

On the back end, the duo of Bobby Cloutier (2.20/.935) and Xavier Garneau (1.52/.946) has been the best in the league, putting up ridiculous stats. The Blazers

have allowed a league-low 41 goals, which is a credit to the dominance of the two netminders.

Oklahoma City will battle Northern Colorado on the road this weekend, then take on the Bellingham Blazers, Fresno Monsters, and Long Beach Bombers at the WSHL Showcase to close out their first half.

WICHITA JR. THUNDER (4-16-0-1, 13 pts.)

@JrThunderHockey

The Wichita Jr. Thunder saw just how far they need to come last weekend when they were easily swept at home by Oklahoma City. At this point, the Blazers are arguably the favorites for the Thorne Cup, while the Jr. Thunder have one of the younger rosters in the league.

Despite last weekend's result, Wichita has made some strides recently. All four of the Jr. Thunder's wins on the season have come in the last few weeks.

The Jr. Thunder will have another shot at picking up some points this weekend when they play Dallas on the road. The Snipers have three wins over Wichita, but two of those were decided by two goals or fewer.

Wichita's slate of games at the Western States Shootout includes matchups with the CPJHL Red Team, the Cheyenne Stampede, and the Cold Lake Wings.

---Jared Tennant for Harrington Sports Media