

WSHL WEEKLY NOTES 02.01.19 – NORTHWESTERN 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.

BELLINGHAM BLAZERS (29-10-0-1, 88 pts.)

@BhamBlazers

The Bellingham Blazers had their hands full over the first two games of a series on the road against Southern Oregon last weekend before breaking through for a 10-0 win in the third and final contest.

Southern Oregon logged a 3-2 overtime win in the opening game before Bellingham rebounded with a 2-1 victory the following evening. Goaltender Edward Coffey stopped 29 of 30 shots in the game, and the only goal he allowed came with 12 seconds remaining in the final period.

The Blazers are still comfortably in first place with a 24-point lead on Seattle. The Totems and Blazers have had a back-and-forth season series with Seattle winning six of the 10 matchups between the two clubs.

The season-long battle between the in-state rivals could end with a matchup in the Northwest Division Finals this coming spring. Last year, Bellingham won its first playoff series since joining the WSHL in 2016, and it will be looking to make a run to the Thorne Cup tournament this year with an experienced, veteran squad.

Forwards Timothy Prexler and Jamahl Eckett have much in common. Besides the fact that both players are listed at 5-foot-11, 172 pounds, Prexler and Eckett are in first and second, respectively, in scoring on the Blazers roster.

Prexler has 30 goals and 59 assists for a total of 89 points, while Eckett has posted a 36-49-85 scoring line. Prexler is averaging 2.28 points per game while Eckett is hair ahead of him at 2.36. Both are within the top five in the WSHL scoring race and have an outside shot at the league scoring title.

Prexler, Eckett, and the rest of the Blazers are off this weekend as they prepare for a three-game series at home against Southern Oregon next weekend.

SEATTLE TOTEMS (20-10-1-2, 64 pts)
@SeattleJrTotems

The Seattle Totems' two-week hiatus will conclude this weekend as the club travels to Southern Oregon Ice for a two-game matchup with the Spartans.

Seattle has won all seven of its meetings with Southern Oregon, but it hasn't been easy. Four of the wins have come by two goals or fewer, including a 5-4 overtime win on October 27 that put the finishing touches on a three-game sweep.

"I've kind of learned to never take anything for granted, but I do know that our games with Southern Oregon are always close, especially in the Medford Mad House," said Totems Head Coach and General Manager Michael Murphy. "It never seems to matter what the records are when we play them, they're always great games."

This season has proven that Bellingham and Seattle are the clear favorites to represent the Northwest Division in the Thorne Cup Tournament. Murphy respects the talent up-and-down the Blazers roster but remains confident in his team.

“Bellingham has another great team this year,” he said. “Mark Collins does a great job with his teams and they are tough to beat, but we would love the chance to play them for the right to get to the Thorne Cup. A lot of hockey has to be played before we might get that chance.”

Barring an unexpected hot streak from West Sound or Southern Oregon in the playoffs, it appears that the Blazers and Totems are destined for a pivotal matchup.

After this weekend’s games, the Totems will play a couple of games against West Sound next week with home games on Wednesday and Saturday.

SOUTHERN OREGON SPARTANS (9-23-1-1, 30 pts.)

@wshlspartans

With 17 games left in the regular season, the Southern Oregon Spartans are looking to maintain the third seed in the Northwest Division. The Spartans are eight points ahead of fourth-place West Sound, but trail Seattle by 34 points.

After next weekend’s three-game series on the road in Bellingham, Southern Oregon will play its final 14 games on home ice. The Spartans will look to improve upon their poor fortunes at home, where they have dropped 12 of 17 games this season.

Last weekend, the Spartans played a strong series against Bellingham, which has the third-most points in the WSHL. In the opening game, forward Hayden Moistner was the hero, netting his 16th goal of the season with 9.6 seconds left in overtime to give Southern Oregon a dramatic 3-2 win.

Moistner is second on the team in goals behind Eric Vanderhoff (25) and has a 16-18-34 scoring line over 32 appearances. The Wasilla, Alaska native is averaging over a point-per-game and leads the Spartans in penalty minutes with 189.

The following evening, a decisive goal early in the third period proved to be the difference as Bellingham won by a score of 2-1. Blueliner Axel Low (13-28-41) scored the Spartans’ lone tally with 12 seconds left in the contest after Southern Oregon had pulled netminder Kayden Pickles, who made 29 saves, for an extra attacker.

The Spartans ran out of gas in the series finale and allowed a season-high in goals in a 10-0 loss. Bellingham scored five second-period goals and led shots on goal 53-27.

Southern Oregon will wrap up its season series with the Blazers this weekend on the road, giving them a chance to avenge the blowout loss.

WEST SOUND ADMIRALS (6-26-2-0, 22 pts.)

@wsadmirals

The West Sound Admirals' losing streak hit seven games over the weekend when they were swept in a three-game series at home against the Fresno Monsters.

The series opened with a 9-2 Fresno win as seven different Monsters scored in what turned out to be an extremely chippy affair that featured three ejections, four game misconducts, and 15 fighting majors. Goaltender Josh Breznik had a busy night, making a total of 47 saves.

Tempers settled down the following day as the Admirals blew a 4-3 lead in the final period and fell by a 5-4 final. Defenseman Harmen Vining (9-29-38) had a fantastic outing, with a goal and three assists.

Fresno erupted for 12 goals in the final game in a blowout victory. Forward Vladislav Polyashov (19-12-31), who leads the Admirals in goals, scored twice in what turned out to be a forgettable game for Ads fans.

West Sound will play host to another Western Division opponent this weekend, but things should be a bit more evenly matched. The Valencia Flyers have a record of 6-21-0-4 and are in 15-point hole at the bottom of their division.

The Admirals will get back to playing divisional matchups on February 6 with a two-game series against Seattle on the road before traveling to Southern Oregon for a trio of games against the Spartans.

---Jared Tennant for Harrington Sports Media