

# WSHL WEEKLY NOTES 02.27.19 – 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.*

**FRESNO MONSTERS (28-14-3-1, 91 pts)**

**@WSHLMonsters**

**[www.FresnoMonsters.com](http://www.FresnoMonsters.com)**

The Fresno Monsters, idle since February 9, return to the ice this weekend with games at Valencia and Ontario this Saturday and Sunday.

Despite being out of action and, therefore, not picking up any points in the standings, the Monsters have still clinched a top-two finish in the Western Division. They could still mathematically unseat division leader Long Beach but the Bombers would really have to stumble for that to happen.

The most likely scenario is a #2 seed for the divisional playoffs and a match-up against either San Diego or Ontario.

Despite having scored only four fewer goals as a team this season than the division-leaders in Long Beach, Fresno does not have many individual players who have put up huge numbers.

With just five games – all on the road – remaining on their schedule, the Monsters have been led offensively by Petr Philippov (30-41-71). No other player on the Fresno roster has surpassed 50 points on the season.

Connor Hyden, who scored 18 goals in 26 games for the Monsters during the 2014-15 season, is piling up points for the Naval Academy's ACHA club. After putting up 36 points (12-24-36) in 34 games as a freshman a year ago, Hyden is up to 43 points (19-24-43) in the same number of games this season.

### **LONG BEACH BOMBERS (31-7-4-2, 103 pts)**

**@LBBombersHockey**

[www.JrBombers.org](http://www.JrBombers.org)

The Long Beach Bombers had a bit of a letdown following their big series at Ogden February 15-17.

The Bombers sandwiched a pair of one-goal wins over the fourth-place Ontario Avalanche with a 5-4 loss to the fifth-place Valencia Flyers last weekend. That is not the kind of play you would like to see out of a first-place team with the playoffs right around the corner.

Six of the last seven Bombers games have been decided by one goal. They split those six games down the middle, winning three and losing three.

The schedule will not get any easier this weekend. Long Beach will try to get their game back on track in Bellingham, WA where they will play three games against the Northwest Division-leading Blazers.

One area the team could improve upon is drawing penalties. The Bombers have been put on the power play just 163 times through their first 44 games of the season – the lowest number of man-advantage opportunities in the entire WSHL. That is an odd statistic considering the amount of time the Bombers spend possessing the puck.

Tomas Urbanec, who already tops the franchise all-time list for goals (120) and points (268), needs just six more assists to match Johnny Linehan for the team's all-time assist record (154).

With nine more points, Urbanec (42-49-91) will become the third player in franchise history to record a 100-point season. Filip Martinec and Tomas Nemeth (2x) are the only other players to accomplish the feat in a Bombers sweater.

### **ONTARIO AVALANCHE (15-26-1-3, 50 pts)**

**@TmOntAvs**

[www.OntarioAvalanche.com](http://www.OntarioAvalanche.com)

The Ontario Avalanche continued to play their best stretch of hockey despite losing two of three games last week. They are still on a 4-2-0-1 run and have closed to within six points of the third-place San Diego Sabers.

After winning 6-3 at Valencia on Thursday, the Avalanche played a home-and-home series against the division-leading Long Beach Bombers and, despite dropping both games, only came up a goal short in each.

Friday night in Long Beach the Avs put together another impressive effort, leading the division-leading Bombers 4-2 midway through the third period. Long Beach rallied for a 5-4 win, however.

Ontario scored first on Sunday, but Long Beach responded with a pair of first-period goals and protected a 2-1 lead for the final 42:36 of the game thanks to Domenic Bosetti, who stopped 18 of 19 shots.

Aleksei Vereshchagin made 34 saves for the Avalanche.

This week the race for seeding in the Western Division continues with a home-and-home with the Valencia Flyers. Two wins would go a long way to securing home ice should the Avs and Flyers end up going head-to-head in the first round of the playoffs. It would also keep Ontario's hopes alive to skip the first round and go right to the division semifinals if they can unseat San Diego to claim the #3 seed.

### **SAN DIEGO SABERS (15-22-4-3, 56 pts)**

**@sdsabershockey**

[www.SanDiegoSabersHockey.com](http://www.SanDiegoSabersHockey.com)

Since returning from the Christmas break, the San Diego Sabers are 3-10-1-2, collecting only 13 of a possible 48 points. That has allowed Ontario – once comfortably in the rear-view mirror – to close to within six points of the Sabers although San Diego has one game in hand (7-6).

The Sabers and Avalanche do not play each other head-to-head again this season.

The Sabers play three games at Seattle this weekend in what should be a pretty entertaining series. The Totems are in second place in the Northwest Division, but are trying to make their move on first place. The Sabers are trying to hold onto third place and avoid having to play a first-round series.

Aidan Harding, a 19-year-old with previous WSHL experience, has not gotten the job done since coming over in a trade from Ontario. Harding is 2-2-0 with a 5.44 goals-against average and .858 save percentage.

That keeps the pressure on 2001 birth year goalie Marshall McKallip (8-14-2, 4.34, .905). Look for the Avs to give Harding some more starts over the last few weeks to see if he can get his game in order. Teams looking to make a playoff run – especially in a league with three-in-three playoff schedules – need to have a #2 goalie they have confidence in.

### **VALENCIA FLYERS (10-27-2-4, 38 pts)**

**@valenciaflyers**

**[www.ValenciaFlyers.com](http://www.ValenciaFlyers.com)**

The Valencia Flyers are 12 points behind fourth-place Ontario with eight games (and 24 possible points) still on the table over the rest of the regular season schedule.

While the Flyers are still mathematically still in the race to catch third-place San Diego (18 points back), Valencia is probably just focused on the more attainable goal of closing the gap with Ontario, who they face in a home-and-home series this week.

Although moving up in the standings may seem like a tall order, an overtime win over San Diego followed by a 5-4 win over Long Beach has to have the Flyers feeling confident heading into their final eight regular season games.

Danylo Moroz scored seven goals in three games last week, giving him 45 on the season. That ties him for fifth in the WSHL with Jamahl Eakett of Bellingham. Moroz

has found the net in 11 of his last 12 games, scoring multiple goals in seven of those contests, and potting a total of 20 goals over that span.

It also puts him just three behind Brian Voogt (2007-08) for the franchise single-season record for goals (48).

Moroz (45-46-91) also has a great chance to finish in the 50-goal, 100-point club which currently consists of a pair of Edson Aeros; Sebastian Heden (54-69-123) and Emil Johansson (61-57-118).

*--- Compiled by Scott Harrington for Harrington Sports Media*