

WSHL WEEKLY NOTES 11.02.17 – NORTHWEST DIVISION



BELLINGHAM BLAZERS (3-5-2, 8 pts)

www.BellinghamBlazers.pointstreaksites.com

@Bhamblazers

A pair of wins over West Sound last weekend has put the Bellingham Blazers back on track and locked the club into a fourth-place tie with the Warriors.

Bellingham held on for a 5-4 victory in the first game before lighting the lamp even more often the following night in a 7-5 triumph.

It was a great series for a Blazers offense that has not necessarily been bad, but has had struggled with inconsistency.

Bellingham is now averaging a more-than-respectable 4.8 goals per contest.

Forward Ruslan Novruzov collected five points against the Warriors, capped off by a 2-2-4 showing in the second game of the series.

Novruzov now shares the team lead in points with Jamahl Eackett. Both players share identical scoring lines of 9-10-19.

Bellingham has been one of the most disciplined teams in the league with a division-low 137 penalty minutes. Only the Long Beach Bombers and San Diego Sabers have earned fewer PIMs as a team league-wide.

The Blazers will welcome Southern Oregon to Bellingham Sportsplex this weekend for a three-game series. The Spartans are reeling, losing seven straight and 11 of 12 games to start the year.

IDAHO ICECATS (9-0-0, 18 pts)
www.IdaholceCats.com

As we've come to expect over the last several years, the Idaho IceCats posted another dominant series over a struggling opponent last weekend when they swept Casper, a Mountain Division club that has now dropped six straight.

The Coyotes failed to put up much of a fight against the IceCats, who have yet to play in a series that was competitive for all three games.

The closest game was a 5-0 whitewashing in the series opener that saw goaltender Shaun Brown log one of the easiest shutouts of his career. Brown recorded just 10 saves as his defense swarmed the Casper forwards and prevented numerous scoring chances.

Brown can't complain too much about the lack of work. The rookie, who was already off to a strong start, leads Idaho netminders with a .939/1.00 slash line.

Despite playing six games fewer than division-leading Tahoe, the IceCats seem to be on the verge of taking over the top spot in the division. The club is just two points behind the Icemen.

Idaho is on a bye this week. Its next series will begin November 9 when it travels to Seattle to open a three-game set.

SEATTLE TOTEMS (6-3-1, 13 pts)
www.SeattleJrTotems.com
[@SeattleJrTotems](#)

Before last weekend, the Seattle Totems were undefeated in regulation. Things quickly changed when they dropped three in a row to Tahoe and failed to pick up a point.

One poor series is no reason to panic, and a couple of the games were close, but failing to pick up a point against one of the other top teams in the division must have been discouraging for a Totems squad that is trying to make the jump to contention.

Forward Mitch Hunt is having a nice under-the-radar start to the year, scoring at a point-per-game pace with five goals and five assists over his 10 appearances.

Hunt is on pace to surpass his 18-18-36 season last year, which would give the 19-year-old a new career high in single-season points. Over 105 games with Seattle the past three seasons, Hunt has posted a 38-39-77 line.

Seattle will get a chance to rebound this weekend with a two-game set on the road against West Sound. The two clubs split a pair of games in the WSHL's opening weekend, so it should be another competitive series.

SOUTHERN OREGON SPARTANS (1-11-0, 2 pts)

www.SOSpartans.com

[@wshlspartans](https://twitter.com/wshlspartans)

After a week away to regroup, the Southern Oregon Spartans will get back it at this weekend with three games on the road against Bellingham. Even with all of the Spartans' early-season woes, they could potentially move into a tie with the Blazers in the division standings with a series sweep.

Southern Oregon has been relying on a goaltending duo of Krystof Holub and Austin Toussaint. Both netminders have been tested night in and night out. Toussaint is facing an average of nearly 45 shots per game while Holub is tasked with about 40 shots every start.

The heavy workload has negatively impacted the stats of both goaltenders, who each sport save percentages well below .900.

Holub has had plenty of success back in his native Czech Republic, while Toussaint logged a solid .910 save percentage last year with the Spartans, so this doesn't seem to be an issue with a simple lack of talent. Both players

would likely benefit from increased defensive pressure and awareness from the Southern Oregon blueliners.

TAHOE ICEMEN (9-4-2, 20 pts)

www.Tahoelcemen.com

@Tahoelcemen

The Tahoe Icemen put up their most impressive performance of the season last weekend with a three-game sweep of Seattle. The Totems had been threatening to take over the top spot in the division, but the Icemen handed them their first three regulation losses of the season.

Defenseman Phil Heisse recorded his first hat trick of the season in Tahoe's 9-3 win in the first game. Heisse, who was one of the top-scoring d-men in the league last year at 21-44-65 over 49 games, looks like he's playing better than ever in his sophomore season.

The result of the sweep for Tahoe is a commanding seven-point lead over Seattle, which is now in third place.

The Icemen are beginning to make opponents dread playing at South Lake Tahoe Arena, as they have a shining 7-1-1 record on home ice. Tahoe has not lost a home game since the beginning of October, when it fell to Ontario 1-0.

The Icemen have their work cut out for them this weekend when they travel to Ogden for a three-game set against the Mountain Division-leading Mustangs at The Ice Sheet.

WEST SOUND WARRIORS (4-8-0, 8 pts)

www.WestSoundWarriors.com

@WS_Warriors

Following a fast start that saw them win four of their first five contests, life in the WSHL has not been kind to the West Sound Warriors. West Sound played hard but dropped a pair of games against Bellingham last week to push its losing streak to seven games.

Forward Alec Johnson became the second Warrior to reach double-digit points, and he now owns a scoring line of 4-7-11. Johnson joins leading scorer Harri Koll (9-5-14), and that duo will soon welcome in Conno Wherrett (2-7-9), Bryce Ebert (5-4-9), and Samuel Pelech (3-6-9).

Koll is the only player on West Sound's roster scoring an average of a point per game or more, with 14 points over 12 games.

The second-year, Estonian-born Koll had a 15-15-30 line last year with the Butte Cobras and followed head coach Ty Smith to West Sound this season.

The Warriors return home to Bremerton Ice Center this weekend for a pair of games against Seattle, which West Sound defeated in its WSHL debut on September 22.

--- Jared Tennant for Harrington Sports Media