

WSHL WEEKLY NOTES 11.16.17 – NORTHWEST DIVISION



BELLINGHAM BLAZERS (5-8-3, 13 pts)

www.BellinghamBlazers.pointstreaksites.com

@Bhamblazers

The Bellingham Blazers fought hard, but were ultimately swept last weekend by a talented Fresno squad.

The Blazers, who dropped back to three games below .500, made the series closer than the final scores would indicate. They simply gave up too many shots to a Fresno offense that has one of the best first lines in the league in Cody Key, Jacob Rudloff, and Daylon Mannon.

Bellingham's remaining first-half schedule prior to the WSHL Showcase is not necessarily easy, but by no means are any of the games un-winnable.

After a three-game set at home against Tahoe this weekend, the Blazers will take on Seattle on November 22 and will not play again until a pair of games against West Sound and Seattle December 2-3.

Bellingham will close out the regular portion of its first-half schedule the following week with a home-and-home series against West Sound.

As head coach Mark Collins stated last week, one of the Blazers' goals is to finish the first half in the top three of the division. As of now, his club is just three points out of third place and seems entirely capable of making it there within the next month.

IDAHO ICECATS (12-0-0, 24 pts)

www.IdahoIceCats.com

The Idaho IceCats continued their strong start to the season with three consecutive shutouts over Seattle, which led the Northwest Division just a few weeks ago.

The IceCats showed no mercy as they outscored the Totems 28-0 over the course of the series. In a week that seemed to show off the parity of the WSHL with a plethora of close games, Idaho showed once again it is still the team to beat in this league.

Idaho has had only one game decided by one goal, a 5-4 win over Tahoe in its season opener. Other than that, each contest has been won by three or more goals.

The Seattle series pushed the IceCats' power play past the 30% success mark, the best in the Northwest Division and third best among all WSHL teams.

Barring anything unexpected, Idaho should be able to take care of business this weekend at home against Southern Oregon, a club that has dropped 16 of its 18 games.

If the IceCats do pull off another sweep, they will have clinched the league's longest win streak this season. The previous mark was 15 in a row to start the year by Long Beach.

In all likelihood, the IceCats will match up with the Bombers at the WSHL Showcase next month. That game will be a must-watch for WSHL fans, as two of the best teams the league has to offer will face off.

SEATTLE TOTEMS (6-7-2, 14 pts)

www.SeattleJrTotems.com

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

The Seattle Totems' skid continued last weekend as they failed to score a goal in a three-game sweep at the hands of Idaho. The Totems have dropped eight consecutive games after a strong 6-0-1 start that gave them an early lead in the division.

Seattle needs to do everything it can to get its offense back on track. After averaging about 4.5 goals per contest during their quick start, the Totems have netted just 13 goals over their last eight games and have scored more than three goals in a game just once during that stretch.

Forwards Michael Shippee and Tom Ignatovich are doing their best to keep the Seattle scoring effort afloat. Both are the central cogs of an offense that is otherwise searching for answers.

Shippee (7-19-26) and Ignatovich (13-7-20) are both scoring at over a point-per-game pace. Beyond those two, just three Totems skaters have scored more than four goals, and nine players have yet to find the back of the net.

Seattle will look to turn things around this weekend when it travels to West Sound for a two-game set.

SOUTHERN OREGON SPARTANS (2-16-0, 4 pts)

www.SOSpartans.com

[@wshlspartans](#)

After being swept once again, the Southern Oregon Spartans remain in the basement of the Northwest Division.

The Spartans did their best against a tough Utah team, but they could not solve the Outliers' netminders and managed just two goals in three games. Southern Oregon kept the first two contests fairly close, but ran out of steam in the final game, a 9-2 defeat.

The Spartans are now tasked with playing undefeated Idaho in six of their next nine games, including three games at Manchester Ice Centre in McCall, Idaho, this weekend.

That stretch will take Southern Oregon all the way to the end of its first-half schedule on December 10, excluding games in Las Vegas at the Showcase that have yet to be announced.

TAHOE ICEMEN (10-8-3, 20 pts)

www.Tahoelcemen.com

[@Tahoelcemen](#)

The Tahoe Icemen were knocked out of first place last weekend as they managed three of six points in a three-game set against West Sound.

The series opener went quite well for the Icemen, with defenseman Phil Heisse notching his third hat trick of the year and netminder Wade Conlan stopping 50 of 52 Warrior shots in an 8-2 win.

After dropping the next game in overtime, Tahoe came out on the short side of another close game in a 5-4 loss the following day.

Captain Paul Frys had a rough series offensively, contributing just one assist over three games. For most players, that wouldn't be too big of a deal. But when you're in the top 10 of the league scoring race and have collected 70 or more points in each of the last two seasons, it becomes more noticeable.

Frys, who has now logged at least one point in all but four games, is still on pace for his best season yet with a 16-21-37 line through 21 appearances. His career-high in scoring came last season with Vancouver when he put up a line of 35-39-74.

With a seven-point lead on third-place West Sound, the Icemen are still in a great position despite dropping five of their last six games. Tahoe is just one point back of the top spot in the division.

This weekend's matchup with Bellingham could help Tahoe get back on track. The Icemen are 3-0-0 against the Blazers, and none of those games were particularly close.

WEST SOUND WARRIORS (8-9-0, 16 pts)

www.WestSoundWarriors.com

@WS_Warriors

After getting blown out in the opening contest, the West Sound Warriors made significant progress last weekend by taking two of three from previously division-leading Tahoe.

The Warriors have just one regulation loss over their last five games after spending most of the early season near the bottom of the division.

Leading scorer Harri Koll (13-6-19) netted the overtime winner in the second game before scoring the game-winner in the final period of the third and final contest.

All in all, it was a good showing for Ty Smith's squad, which has pushed itself into third place in the division.

"I thought our goaltending gave us a chance to win versus a very tough Tahoe squad," said Smith. "Also, the veteran presence of Koll, Mattias Wikstrom, and Eric Safstrom helped out big time."

Wikstrom (6-11-17) and Safstrom (9-9-18) have both made strong contributions this year. Both players are technically rookies but bring plenty of experience playing Tier II junior hockey together in their native Sweden with Sundsvall Hockey J20.

Smith was cautious in his optimism after one of his club's most impressive series so far.

"We have a long way to go as we need more consistency from our guys from the back end to the front," he said.

The Warriors will return to Bremerton Ice Center this weekend for a pair of games against Seattle on Saturday and Sunday. West Sound will have a chance to make it back over the .500 mark for the first time since early October.

--- Jared Tennant for Harrington Sports Media