

WSHL WEEKLY NOTES 11.21.17 – MOUNTAIN DIVISION



CASPER COYOTES (3-14-0, 6pts)

www.caspercoyotes.com

@CasperCoyotes

The Casper Coyotes kept it close against Ogden last Friday, getting two goals apiece from Jacob Elik and Dallen Neese. The two teams traded strikes in the second and third periods, but it was a four-goal first period that proved the difference for Ogden in a 9-5 win.

Casper was subsequently shut out in the following two games.

Casper's schedule favors them going forward for a bit, then does them no favors come mid-January. The Coyotes have a three-game set with Cheyenne this weekend to get ready for the Western States Shootout.

Once 2018 hits, they have another set with Cheyenne before trading dates with the likes of Colorado and Ogden well into mid-February. That will provide

a serious challenge for a Coyote team looking to find their footing in the Mountain Division.

CHEYENNE STAMPEDE (2-17-0, 4pts)

www.cheyennestampe.com

@StampsHockey

Cheyenne is ready for the Western States Shootout, having won only two games this season it may be time for a change of pace for the Stampede.

After an 11-2 loss to the Superior RoughRiders at home on Friday, Cheyenne used a Logan Syrup hat trick to keep it close in Superior on Saturday. Ultimately the RoughRiders prevailed, 6-4, for the two-game series sweep fending off a three-goal third period for the Stamps.

The goals by Syrup were the first of the season as the 17-year old North Dakota native just joined the team and now has a 3-1-4 line in his first two games in the WSHL.

Saturday's game was by far the best for Cheyenne in a number of weeks and could mean things are looking up for the Stampede heading into the Las Vegas showcase.

George Leech's 4-5-9 line for the season leads the team after he went 1-3-4 over the weekend. His unassisted goal on Friday gave the Stamps a brief 1-0 lead.

Cheyenne plays six straight with Casper, who is also trying to turn things around. With 11 games before they head to Vegas, the Stampede have some time to try and get in gear before the new year.

COLORADO EAGLES (14-5-3, 31pts)

www.coloradojunioreagles.com

@COJrEagles

The Colorado Jr. Eagles headed into last weekend geared for a battle with the Mid-Western Division's first-place El Paso Rhinos. Billed as one of the top contenders for the Thorne Cup this year, the series with the Rhinos was to be a test to see if the Jr. Eagles truly belong in the conversation as one of the league's better teams.

The bad news is, the Jr. Eagles failed to win a game. The good news is, two of the games could have gone either way. A 6-0 shutout loss on Saturday was sandwiched with 4-3 losses on Friday and Sunday with the third game of the series going to overtime.

Sylas Kalyan scored in his first game with Colorado on Friday and goalies Hunter Bancroft and Braden LaJoie split time in the loss.

The Jr. Eagles have the depth to make a run this season with 17 players scoring in the double-digits led by Carter Dahl's solid 14-14-28 line.

They are getting solid goaltending and scoring so, at this point, it seems they just need to catch a break or two, and then don't be surprised to see the Jr. Eagles go on a mid-season tear.

Until then, they'll play two straight one-off games at Superior before a bye week. With four games before the Western States Shootout in Vegas, Colorado could use the desert tournament as a time to push themselves back into the Thorne Cup conversation.

OGDEN MUSTANGS (18-4-0, 36pts)

www.ogdenmustangs.com

@OgdenMustangs

Ogden took all three games from Mountain Division rivals Casper over the weekend, trading goals in the final two periods of game one, but shutting out the Coyotes over the rest of the way.

A four-goal first period on Friday that saw Sage Fleming get a goal and an assist, and Matus Spodniak earn two assists, proved to be the difference in that game.

Mustangs head coach Jake Laime likes the way his team turned it around this weekend, shutting Casper out on Saturday and Sunday.

"We played well offensively," said Laime. "Friday, I think we got over confident. Saturday and Sunday, we controlled the neutral zone much better and spent less time in the defensive zone."

Spodniak finished the weekend with a 7-8-15 line in three games and now leads the league with a 36-41-77 line in just 22 games this season. His point

totals put him 20 points ahead of the 19-38-57 totals that teammate Jacob Laurin – the second-leading scorer in the WSHL – has scored this year.

The Mustang's 178 goals scored are more than 50 better than the next team in the league, and they aren't showing any signs of slowing down having won 15 of their last 16 games.

Goalies Daniel Pavlicko and Oliver Marslatt split time over the weekend, each posting a shutout.

Pavlicko now has a .952 SV% in four appearances between the pipes for the 'Stangs.

Before heading to the Western States Shootout, the Mustangs have a bit of a bumpy road facing off with upstart Utah and undefeated Idaho in the coming weeks. The Outliers of Utah have Ogden in their sights, and Idaho is allowing a mere 1.2 goals a game on their way to winning their first 15 this season.

SUPERIOR ROUGHRIDERS (12-10-0, 24 pts)

www.SuperiorRoughRiders.com

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

The RoughRiders swept Mountain Division rivals Cheyenne in two games, outscoring their opponents 17-6, with Nikita Sheberov leading the way going 5-5-10 over the weekend.

Sheberov leads the Riders with a 28-21-49 line for the season, besting teammate Thore Weyrauch's 14-22-36 line that is good for second on the team.

While Sheberov and Weyrauch are doing great things for Superior, they may need some of their teammates to step up as the third-leading scorers on the team – Erik Buschmann and Erik Back – are a bit behind with 16 points each. That's a 20-point drop-off from second to third on the scoring chart for a team that's going to need to compete with the scoring of Utah, Colorado, and Ogden within their division.

Last week, Head Coach Paul DePuydt said his team is on the cusp of putting together a string of good games.

"I think we need to compete as a team for 60 minutes of every game," coach DePuydt said. "We know the Mountain Division opponents present a very

tough challenge every game, so we must stay sharp at all times and can't take anything for granted."

Superior has two straight one-off weekends with Colorado, then it's three games with Cheyenne before the Shootout. That's five games over the course of four weeks giving the RoughRiders plenty of time to rest and practice and maybe make some noise in the second half of the season.

UTAH OUTLIERS (15-4-0, 30pts)

www.UtahOutliers.com

@UtahOutliers

The Utah Outliers are running a pretty impressive seven-game winning streak, beginning with a big win against Mountain Division rivals Ogden.

Utah had the week off but faces Ogden again in a one-off at home this weekend.

Defenseman Zack Hoffman continues to tear it up in his first season in the WSHL with a 12-19-31 line that not only leads the Outliers team, but also leads his position within the league.

But the story this season for Utah has been the play of goaltenders Otto Saxin and Dawson Rodin. Both backstops are playing in their first seasons in the WSHL, and both are among the league leaders, each posting numbers that are gold in any league.

Rodin's 7-3 record leads the team in wins, but Saxin is undefeated with six victories. Saxin has an incalculable .54/.967 slash line and, in twice as many games, Rodin is pulling in a 1.51/.950 slash.

Utah were the darlings of last season, riding a new goalie to a mid-season roll that saw them get into the conversation as one of the better teams in the league. This year, that conversation has started early thanks to the play of Rodin and Saxin.

After Ogden, it's the Tahoe Icemen, who sit near the top of the Northwest Division. Then, they have two more games with the Mustangs, which will make it six straight games against two of the leagues better teams – a great test to see if Utah is for real.

--- Tyler Whidden for Harrington Sports Media