



WSHL WEEKLY NOTES 10.11.17 – MOUNTAIN DIVISION

CASPER COYOTES (0-2-0, 0 pts)

@CasperCoyotes

The Casper Coyotes had a bye week after two losses to Superior to open their season. Their first eight games of the season are at home before they travel to Idaho to take on the Northwest Division's IceCats. A ninth game was postponed to later in the year after mechanical difficulties at the facilities.

Former Southern Oregon head coach David Cole is now at the helm of the Coyotes and former Spartans are already contributing for their coach, with Brindamour Beard (1-2-3) and Tyler Rossi (0-3-3) leading the team in scoring in the early going.

The 'Yotes have two goaltenders who have seen the bulk of the work so far, Luka Sotlar & Dyllan Ossachuk. The two rookies combined for 70 saves against the RoughRiders.

In search of their first win, Casper will host the Wichita Jr. Thunder this weekend. The defending Thorne Cup champs started out slow, but showed some signs of life against Cheyenne last weekend and will be looking to build on that effort.

CHEYENNE STAMPEDE (2-5-0, 4 pts)

@StampsHockey

The Cheyenne Stampede picked up their first two wins of the year over the weekend, taking two of three from Wichita.

Defenseman Jacob McVay broke a 3-3 tie in the third period with his first of two third-period goals and goaltender Devin Bain made 28 saves in a 7-3 victory Friday.

Roles changed on Saturday as it was Wichita who scored third period goals taking the 5-3 win in a game that saw over 50 minutes in penalties between the two teams.

The story of the weekend for the Stamps was the play of 16-year old Russian sniper Evgenii Bastrakov who scored five goals and added an assist – including a hat trick in Sunday's 8-1 drubbing of the Jr. Thunder. After Cheyenne was shut out in their first four games of the season, it is good to see Bastrakov provide a spark for the young team.

Cheyenne will try to keep their roll going against the Ogden Mustangs this weekend. At this early junction of the year, it's important for teams to see where they stand in their respective divisions, and a series with the Mustangs will surely provide a measuring stick to help the Stampede know where they stand within the Mountain Division.

COLORADO EAGLES (5-1-2, 12 pts)
@COJrEagles

Colorado took two of three from Utah over the weekend, with their lone loss coming in Sunday's double overtime nail-biter.

The Eagles are rolling deep with veterans this year, but it's local-born rookie David Mitchell who leads the team so far. Mitchell went 2-3-5 against the Outliers and now has a 5-5-10 line in his first eight WSHL games.

The Tower of Power defenseman John Tower went 1-3-4 on the weekend and now owns a 2-5-7 line in six games with a team-leading 31 penalty minutes.

Coach Steve Haddon knows that no matter how deep they are, the Eagles have a long road to their goal of a Thorne Cup.

"The Mountain Division is so deep, there is not much separation," Haddon said. "For our group it is about being consistent and growing through the long season. It is a Marathon not a sprint."

Colorado's offense will get a lot of press this year, thanks to coach Haddon's system of spreading the wealth, but it's the goaltending duo of veteran Braden LaJoie and rookie Hunter Bancroft.

LaJoie made 56 saves in the first two games and Bancroft stopped 37 in Sunday's battle, and it may very well be the play of the two backstops that propels the Eagles to the top of the WSHL.

"LaJoie has been solid but also has Bancroft," Haddon said of his goalies. "We are lucky to have a good goalie tandem. Your goaltending needs to be good to go far at any level."

Next up for the Eagles is a trip to Springfield for a date with the Mid-Western Division's Springfield Express. These two teams will face each other six times in the month of October, so each will likely try to set the tone early on Friday.

OGDEN MUSTANGS (5-3-0, 10 pts)
@OgdenMustangs

The Ogden Mustangs found themselves down 4-1 to the Superior RoughRiders in their first game of the weekend. They mounted a comeback, tying the game in the third period, only to lose on a last-minute goal by the RoughRiders.

Six different Mustang skaters scored on Friday, and Ogden outshot Superior 59-36, in the 7-6 loss.

The Stangs came back with a vengeance on Saturday, scoring quick goals all game and winning 8-1 behind veteran Matus Spodniak's 2-3-5 line and the team's 60 shots on net.

Down 2-0 on Sunday, the Mustangs came back again with five straight goals to take the series two games to one against their division rivals.

Jonathan Chin started all three games in the Ogden net and made 69 saves on the weekend. He was untested in the middle contest, but keeping the Mustangs in it during the bookend games.

The Slovakian sniper Spodniak is now sporting an 8-11-19 line in his first eight games, improving upon his 1.46 points-per-game WSHL career average.

Former Oklahoma City Blazer Ross Bartlett continues to thrive with his new team, scoring a 5-12-17 line in his first eight games in the Mountain Division.

The Mustangs will host division rivals Cheyenne this weekend before heading out to Southern Oregon to take on the Northwest Division's Spartans.

Ogden will have four series against Northwest Division teams this season, including two with the Idaho IceCats. The competition from other divisions will surely help the perennial contenders as they march towards the playoffs.

SUPERIOR ROUGHRIDERS (5-2-0, 10 pts)

@SPR_RoughRiders

Coach Paul DePuydt's new kids on the block keep rolling for the RoughRiders, giving the team a huge win against Mountain Division rivals Ogden in the first game between these two teams on Friday.

While Saturday's blowout loss is surely a sore spot with the team, Sunday's early two-goal lead proved that Friday's win may not have been a fluke. The team eventually lost on Sunday, but Ogden is deep with WSHL veterans and Superior are being led by many newcomers.

Once the RoughRiders get used to each other's style of play, it could prove beneficial for the team.

"There is always an adjustment period for new players when they start playing together," DePuydt said. "It is a constant building and growth process and we think that our team will definitely get stronger as the boys learn more about each other throughout the season."

As of now, Nikita Sheberov (13-8-21), Thore Weyrauch (6-7-13), and Daniel Benilov (4-7-11) are leading the RoughRiders through the first seven games, and a dozen skaters have scored a goal already. The switch may turn on soon, and when it does, it could prove the RoughRiders are ready for their close-up in the league's toughest division.

Superior hosts the Mid-Western Division Dallas Snipers this weekend before a second straight Mid-Western meeting with powerhouse Oklahoma City the following weekend.

In fact, the RoughRiders are going for it with all cross-division series until a one-off with Colorado November 11. In that game, Superior will be tested and ready to see where they belong against one of the best and deepest teams in the WSHL.

UTAH OUTLIERS (2-3-0, 4 pts)

@UtahOutliers

The Utah Outliers were shut out in the first game of their series against Mountain Division leader Colorado, had an unlucky third period in the second game, then rallied for the big double-overtime win on Sunday.

Zack Hoffman went 1-3-4, and Dylan Massie went 2-1-3 against the Eagles as the Outliers finished 1-2-0 against their division rivals.

Rookie Canadian goaltender Dawson Rodin continues to impress in his first season. Rodin stopped 99 shots over the three games against the high-powered Colorado offense, including a nice stop on a 2-on-1 one-timer about four minutes into Saturday's second period.

Brandon Krumpshmid went 1-1-2 against Colorado and still leads the Outliers in scoring with a 4-1-5 line after four games.

Utah will have their home opener this weekend as they host the Northwest Division's Southern Oregon Spartans in the first of two series between the teams this season.

You can watch Utah highlights against Colorado at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sSdfybDD0Ps>

--- *Tyler Whidden for Harrington Sports Media*