



NORTH AMERICAN HOCKEY LEAGUE WEEKLY RELEASE

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STANDINGS

North Division

TEAM	GP	W-L-OTL	PTS	PCT	GF	GA
zSt. Louis	57	46-9-2	94	.825	246	148
xMahoning Valley	56	34-18-4	72	.643	219	169
xAlpena	58	30-23-5	65	.560	184	177
xUSNTDP	56	28-24-4	60	.536	173	178
Marquette	56	26-27-3	55	.491	180	207
Traverse City	56	21-23-12	54	.482	167	197

South Division

TEAM	GP	W-L-OTL	PTS	PCT	GF	GA
xTopeka	56	37-11-8	82	.732	233	133
xWichita Falls	57	38-17-2	78	.684	220	177
xFairbanks	56	37-15-4	78	.696	173	125
xTexas	57	20-32-5	45	.395	162	196
Alaska	56	16-36-4	36	.321	154	260
Kenai River	58	12-38-8	32	.276	144	257

Central Division

TEAM	GP	W-L-OTL	PTS	PCT	GF	GA
yNorth Iowa	56	37-15-4	78	.696	189	131
xSo. Minnesota	56	29-19-8	66	.589	199	215
xSpringfield	55	27-24-4	58	.527	188	183
xAlexandria	55	27-25-3	57	.518	210	213
Fargo-Moorhead	55	23-29-3	49	.445	183	189
Bismarck	56	18-32-6	42	.375	145	214

x - clinched playoff berth y - clinched division title z - clinched league title

LEADING SCORERS

PLAYER	TEAM	P	GP	G	A	PTS
Cardwell, Adam	WIC	F	55	32	59	91
Salazar, Luke	WIC	F	57	41	46	87
Walters, Shea	NIO	F	56	24	59	83
Nesper, Luke	ALX	F	54	25	51	76
Warda, Ben	STL	F	57	30	42	72
Peterson, Erik	ALP	F	56	24	47	71
O'Kane, Kyle	STL	F	51	40	29	69
Lickteig, Mikael	ALX	F	55	32	37	69
Graham, Derek	MVY	F	55	30	39	69
Everett, Grant	WIC	F	54	19	50	69

LEADING GOALTENDERS

PLAYER	TEAM	GPI	MINS	W-L-OTL	GAA	SPCT
Moss, Robby	NIO	39	2284:22	27-6-4	1.86	.942
Reichard, Cody	FBX	50	2931:05	32-15-2	2.05	.934
Merriam, Bryce	TPK	43	2602:22	25-11-7	2.21	.901
Heeter, Cal	STL	33	1912:00	24-6-1	2.48	.915
Johnson, Mike	STL	26	1522:57	21-3-1	2.56	.909

GOALS

PLAYER	TEAM	P	GP	G
Salazar, Luke	WIC	F	57	41
O'Kane, Kyle	STL	F	51	40

ASSISTS

PLAYER	TEAM	POS	GP	A
Cardwell, Adam	WIC	F	55	59
Walters, Shea	NIO	F	56	59

PLUS/MINUS

PLAYER	TEAM	POS	GP	+/-
Gens, Aaron	TPK	D	53	+41

(two players tied at +41)

Storm Troopers

Blizzard's turnaround leads to postseason berth

In what's turned out to be quite a reversal of fortunes, the once-hard-luck Alexandria Blizzard secured its spot in the Robertson Cup Playoffs last weekend in convincing fashion, rattling off three victories by a combined score of 19-4.

"Those were big wins coming down the stretch," said Blizzard coach-GM **Brad Willner**, whose team improved to 27-25-3 on the season. "To secure a playoff spot by winning three straight games definitely gives us momentum heading into the final weekend (of the regular season)."



Luke Nesper

The Blizzard got its wheels rolling on Friday with a 5-1 victory over the Bismarck Bobcats. **Luke Nesper** (game-winner), **Mikael Lickteig** and **Joe Hartman** each rang up a goal and an assist, while goaltender **Ryan Leets** steered aside 25 shots.

Leets made all 18 saves the next night as the Blizzard blanked the Bobcats, 8-0. **Brandon Larson** notched two goals, including the game-winner, and added two assists, while **Larry Kinkaid** and **Brandon Bahnemann** also tallied two goals apiece.

Alexandria wrapped up its perfect weekend on Sunday with a 6-3 triumph over the Fargo-Moorhead Jets. Six different players scored for the Blizzard, with Nesper putting home the game-winning marker and an assist. Leets stopped 33 shots to pick up his third win in as many nights.

"We played hard, but more importantly, we played smart," said Willner. "That and we're starting to capitalize on our opportunities. We've spoken about that as a team and know when you get this far into the season, great opportunities are few and far between. Everyone plays great defense down the stretch and into playoffs."

What a turnaround it's been for the Blizzard. After starting the season at 3-14-2, the squad has transformed into a legitimate contender, trailing the Springfield Jr. Blues by only one point for third place in the Central Division heading into the final weekend of the season.

"The guys are very excited about earning a playoff spot, especially after the start we had," said Willner, whose team is 24-11-1 since Dec. 1. "They feel they're being rewarded for their hard work, both on and off the ice."

One player who has emerged as one of the league's top offensive threats is Nesper. Doing his damage on a line with **Jerry Freismuth** and Lickteig, the 20-year-old from Eagle River, Wis., now ranks fourth in league scoring with 76 points (25 goals). He's also a plus-32.

Story continued at nahl.com...



LAST WEEK'S SCORES/HIGHLIGHTS

NORTH PLAYER OF THE WEEK

U.S. Under-18 Team forward **Kevin McCarey** struck for four goals and an assist last weekend as Team USA skated to a two-game sweep over Marquette. On Friday, the 18-year-old recorded two goals, including the game-winner, as the U.S. team blanked the Rangers, 3-0. The next night, the Baldwinville, N.Y., native scored two more goals and an assist in a 4-1 triumph. He was also a plus-4 for the weekend.



HONORABLE MENTION: Alpena goaltender **Nick Graves**; Mahoning Valley goaltender **Garrett Bartus**

SOUTH PLAYER OF THE WEEK

Topeka forward **Bryon Paulazzo** connected for two goals and an assist last weekend as the RoadRunners split a pair of games with Southern Minnesota. On Friday, the 18-year-old notched two goals in a 5-4 overtime loss. The next night, the Redwood City, Calif., native recorded an assist in the RoadRunners' 9-3 victory over the Express. He was also a plus-3 for the weekend.



HONORABLE MENTION: Topeka forward **Josh Kamrass** and defenseman **Dennis Brown**

CENTRAL PLAYER OF THE WEEK

Springfield goaltender **Phil Cook** backstopped the Jr. Blues to a pair of wins over Wichita Falls last weekend, turning aside 76 of 79 shots. On Friday, the 20-year-old made 36 saves in a 4-1 victory. The next night, the Wheaton, Ill., native stopped 40 shots as the Jr. Blues downed the Wildcats, 3-2. With the wins, Springfield clinched a spot in the Central Division playoffs.



HONORABLE MENTION: Alexandria goaltender **Ryan Leets**; North Iowa forward **Joe Harcharik**

THE WEEK AHEAD

all times local

Tuesday, March 25

Springfield @ St. Louis, 7:15 pm

Friday, March 28

North Iowa @ Alexandria, 7:00 pm

Springfield @ Bismarck, 7:05 pm

Alaska @ Fairbanks, 7:30 pm

Southern Minnesota @ Fargo-Moorhead, 7:35 pm

USNTDP @ Mahoning Valley, 7:15 pm

Traverse City @ Marquette, 7:30 pm

Topeka @ Texas, 7:30 pm

Saturday, March 29

North Iowa @ Alexandria, 7:00 pm

Springfield @ Bismarck, 7:05 pm

Alaska @ Fairbanks, 7:30 pm

Southern Minnesota @ Fargo-Moorhead, 7:05 pm

USNTDP @ Mahoning Valley, 7:15 pm

Traverse City @ Marquette, 7:30 pm

Topeka @ Wichita Falls, 7:00 pm

Sunday, March 30

Fargo-Moorhead @ Alexandria, 5:00 pm

END OF REGULAR SEASON

Friday, March 21

Bismarck 1 @ Alexandria 5 (ALX: Nesper, GWG, A, +2)

Kenai River 1 @ Fairbanks 6 (FBX: Guran, G, GWG, +2)

Alpena 3 @ Mahoning Valley 2 (ALP: Puskar, G, A, +1)

Fargo-Moorhead 2 @ North Iowa 1 (FM: Harrison, GWG)

Topeka 4 @ So. Minnesota 5 (OT) (SM: Willms-Arrigoni, G, A, +2)

St. Louis 4 @ Traverse City 1 (STL: Bozian-Miller, G, A, +2)

Marquette 0 @ USNTDP 3 (USA: McCarey, G, GWG, +2)

Springfield 4 @ Wichita Falls 1 (SPR: Rickord, G, GWG, +2)

Saturday, March 22

Bismarck 0 @ Alexandria 8 (ALX: Larson, G, GWG, 2A, +5)

Kenai River 4 @ Fairbanks 3 (SO) (KEN: Christianson, G, SOG)

Alpena 2 @ Mahoning Valley 3 (MV: Bartus, 43 saves)

Fargo-Moorhead 0 @ North Iowa 3 (NI: Moss, 35 saves)

Topeka 9 @ Southern Minnesota 3 (TOP: Smith, G, GWG, +1)

St. Louis 5 @ Traverse City 3 (STL: O'Kane, G, GWG, A, +1)

Marquette 1 @ USNTDP 4 (USA: McCarey, 2G, A, +2)

Springfield 3 @ Wichita Falls 2 (SPR: Patterson, GWG, A, +2)

Sunday, March 23

Fargo-Moorhead 3 @ Alexandria 6 (ALX: Nesper, GWG, 2A)

AROUND THE NAHL

PLAYOFF BOUND: Springfield and Alexandria clinched the final two playoff spots in the Central Division last weekend, while Alpena and the USNTDP locked down the last two postseason berths in the North Division.

COOPER HONORED BY USOC: St. Louis coach-GM **Jon Cooper** was named one of five finalists for the 2007 United States Olympic Committee's Developmental Coach of the Year Award, which will be presented on April 15 during the 2008 U.S. Olympic Team Media Summit in Chicago.

MERRIFIELD TO MICHIGAN STATE: St. Louis forward **Mike Merrifield**, 18, has committed to Michigan State University (CCHA) for the 2009-10 season. This year, the Beverly Hills, Mich., native has 18 goals for 57 points after 57 games.

SAINT ROBBY: Second-year North Iowa goaltender **Robby Moss**, 20, has committed to St. Lawrence University (ECACHL) for next season. The St. Louis native leads the NAHL with a 1.86 goals-against average and a .942 save percentage in 39 appearances this year.

ZIERDEN HEADED TO RIVER-FALLS: Alaska defenseman **Teddy Zierden**, 20, has committed to the University of Wisconsin-River Falls (NCHA) for next season. In 54 games this year, the Sartell, Minn., native has a goal for nine points.

BARTUS BUZZING: Mahoning Valley goaltender **Garrett Bartus**, 18, turned back 71 of 76 shots last weekend as the Phantoms skated to a two-game split with Alpena. "Garrett played very well for us this weekend," said Phantoms coach-GM **Bob Mainhardt**. "He gave us a chance to win both nights."

RELOCATION OF MEMBERSHIP APPROVED: The NAHL's Board of Governors has approved the relocation of BAM, LLC's membership to the Detroit area for the 2008-09 season. BAM currently owns and operates the NAHL's Southern Minnesota Express.

MOHLER DECIDES ON UTICA: Second-year Springfield forward **Steve Mohler**, 21, has committed to Utica College (ECAC West) for next season. The Anaheim, Calif., native has 19 goals for 41 points after 39 games this year.