



NORTH AMERICAN HOCKEY LEAGUE WEEKLY RELEASE

For Immediate Release • January 12, 2009

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STANDINGS

Central Division

TEAM	GP	W-L-OTL	PTS	PCT	GF	GA
North Iowa	35	20-12-3	43	.614	128	108
Bismarck	32	20-11-1	41	.641	93	71
Alexandria	33	18-12-3	39	.591	113	107
Owatonna	34	18-15-1	37	.544	120	115
Albert Lea	33	2-27-4	8	.121	69	155

North Division

TEAM	GP	W-L-OTL	PTS	PCT	GF	GA
Mahoning Valley	34	22-9-3	47	.691	120	99
Traverse City	33	19-9-5	43	.652	107	100
Alpena	33	18-12-3	39	.591	88	92
Marquette	37	17-16-4	38	.514	105	110
USNTDP	29	16-11-2	34	.586	112	79
Motor City	32	6-25-1	13	.203	70	128

South Division

TEAM	GP	W-L-OTL	PTS	PCT	GF	GA
Topeka	36	29-4-3	61	.847	138	75
St. Louis	39	27-7-5	59	.756	155	91
Wichita Falls	31	13-13-5	31	.500	89	120
Springfield	34	11-18-5	27	.397	101	124

West Division

TEAM	GP	W-L-OTL	PTS	PCT	GF	GA
Fairbanks	32	22-6-4	48	.750	132	87
Wenatchee	25	13-11-1	27	.540	75	88
Kenai River	35	11-21-3	25	.357	102	145
Alaska	29	11-17-1	23	.397	95	118

LEADING SCORERS

PLAYER	TEAM	P	GP	G	A	PTS
George, Jordan	TPK	F	36	21	27	48
Hamburg, Andrew	STL	F	33	9	37	46
Gorczyca, Grant	STL	F	38	22	22	44
Bourbonais, Clinton	STL	F	39	14	29	43
Shafer, Steve	TPK	F	36	14	28	42
Paul, Jack	NIO	F	34	16	25	41
Block, Austin	FBX	F	32	15	24	39
Kirchhevel, Justin	STL	F	37	13	26	39
Paulazzo, Bryon	TPK	F	36	14	24	38

(four players tied with 37)

LEADING GOALTENDERS

PLAYER	TEAM	GPI	MINS	W-L-OTL	GAA	SPCT
Merriam, Bryce	TPK	20	1133:29	15-1-3	1.69	.932
Bosner, David	BIS	21	1237:15	13-6-1	1.99	.928
Yanakeff, Will	USA	11	660:20	6-4-1	2.00	.918
Kinkaid, Keith	STL	28	1663:52	20-4-3	2.02	.926
Grogan, Matt	BIS	13	693:08	7-5-0	2.16	.927

GOALS

PLAYER	TEAM	P	GP	G
(three players tied with 22)				

ASSISTS

PLAYER	TEAM	POS	GP	A
Hamburg, Andrew	STL	F	33	37
Bourbonais, Clinton	STL	F	39	29

PLUS/MINUS

PLAYER	TEAM	POS	GP	+/-
Paul, Jack	NIO	F	34	+25
Reinthal, Kris	STL	D	36	+24

Express Picks Up Steam

Owatonna off to 4-0 start in 2009

It's been nothing but a happy New Year for the Owatonna Express, which has rattled off four straight victories to start 2009, including two last weekend against divisional foes.

"Every game for us is like a playoff game right now," said Express head coach **Pat Cullen**, whose team improved to 18-15-1 on the season. "If we want to climb in the standings, we have to continue to win at a consistent rate."

The Express opened its weekend with a 3-2 win over the Albert Lea Thunder on Friday. **Stephen Carew** struck for two goals in the victory, with **Dmitry Lugin** notching the game-winner. Between the pipes, goaltender **Jason Horstman** made 34 saves.



Stephen Carew

Carew potted two more goals the next night as the Express knocked off the Alexandria Blizzard, 6-3. **Dan Cecka** added a goal and three assists in the win, and Horstman made 26 saves.

"The (holiday) break came at a very good time for us and it seems like we're playing with more of a purpose right now," said Cullen. "We're also finding a way to win some of the close games we had been losing."

Carew has been playing with a purpose for much of the season. The 20-year-old from Eden Prairie, Minn., now has two goals in each of his last three games and leads the team in scoring with 35 points.

"He's not only been a very good player for us, but a great leader," Cullen said of the Air Force Academy recruit. "He makes big plays for us at critical times and is one of those players that, as a coach, you never appreciate enough."

"I don't know where we'd be without him. He's that important to what we've done to this point and we'll lean on him as we move forward."

And Horstman, a 19-year-old from Faribault, Minn., has been getting the job done at the other end, winning his first three starts of 2009 for a team still searching for an identity in net.

"He played very well last weekend and stepped up when we needed one of our goalies to do so," said Cullen. "If we're going to continue to have success, goaltending will be of the utmost importance."

On the defensive end, the Express has been making strides thanks in part to the continued progress of **Nick Carson**, **Jake Sloat** and **Tim Smith**.

Offensively, **Zach Vierling**, **Cory Thorson**, **Tony McDonald** and **Chris Bournazos** have been delivering on a consistent basis in addition to Carew.

Owatonna has also been aided by the arrival of Cecka, a skilled, speedy forward who played his first two games with the Express last weekend after being picked up in a trade with the USHL's Indiana Ice, as well as the return of forward **John Kruse**, who was sidelined with an injury since early October.

"He's also had an immediate impact," said Cullen.

Story continued at NAHL.com

sherwood central player of the week

Owatonna forward **Stephen Carew** struck for four goals as the Express skated to two wins. On Friday, the Eden Prairie, Minn., native connected for a pair of goals in a 3-2 triumph over the Albert Lea Thunder. The next night, the 20-year-old potted two more goals as the Express doubled up the Alexandria Blizzard, 6-3. The Air Force Academy recruit was also a plus-6 on the weekend.



sherwood north player of the week

Mahoning Valley forward **Brandon Saad** connected for three goals and an assist as the Phantoms finished the week with a 2-1 record. On Friday, the Gibsonia, Pa., native struck for two goals, including the game-winner, in a 5-3 win over Motor City. The next night, the 16-year-old recorded another goal as the Phantoms downed the Machine, 6-3. Saad registered an assist the next day in a 9-1 loss to the U.S. Under-17 Team. The Top Prospects Tournament selection was also a plus-3 for the week.



sherwood south player of the week

Springfield forward **Brandon Bahnemann** registered four goals in the Jr. Blues' two-game sweep over Wichita Falls. On Friday, the Rochester, Minn., native notched a pair of goals as the Jr. Blues downed the Wildcats, 8-3. The next night, the 20-year-old netted two more goals in a 4-3 triumph. The Top Prospects Tournament selection who started the season with the Alexandria Blizzard was also a plus-4 on the weekend.



sherwood west player of the week

Fairbanks defenseman **Josh Nelson** rang up two goals and five assists as the Ice Dogs skated to a two-game sweep over Alaska. On Friday, the Nekoosa, Wis., native tallied two goals and two assists, including one on **Paul Kirtland's** game-winning marker, in a 5-2 victory. The next night, the 19-year-old recorded three more assists as the Ice Dogs downed the Avalanche, 7-3. Nelson, who was recently acquired from the Bismarck Bobcats, was also a plus-7 for the weekend.



gdi goaltender of the week

Kenai River goaltender **Jimmy Hamby** backstopped the Brown Bears to a pair of wins over Wenatchee, turning aside 85 of 87 shots. On Friday, the Ann Arbor, Mich., native made 41 saves in a 7-1 victory. The next night, the 18-year-old stopped 44 shots as the Brown Bears defeated the Wild, 3-1.



the week ahead *all times local*

Thursday, January 15
Fairbanks @ Topeka, 7:05 pm

Friday, January 16
Wenatchee @ Wichita Falls, 7:05 pm
Fairbanks @ Topeka, 7:05 pm
St. Louis @ Springfield, 7:30 pm
USNTDP @ Motor City, 7:10 pm
Alpena @ Marquette, 7:30 pm
Bismarck @ Alexandria, 7:00 pm
Owatonna @ Albert Lea, 7:00 pm
Kenai River @ Alaska, 7:00 pm

Saturday, January 17
Wenatchee @ Wichita Falls, 7:05 pm
St. Louis @ Springfield, 7:30 pm
North Iowa @ Owatonna, 8:00 pm
Traverse City @ Motor City, 4:00 pm
Alexandria @ Bismarck, 7:00 pm
Marquette @ Alpena, 7:00 pm
Kenai River @ Alaska, 7:00 pm

Sunday, January 18
Marquette @ Alpena, 4:00 pm

around the nahl

ALASKA AVALANCHE: Top Prospects Tournament selection **Kyle Pichler** scored a pair of goals as the Avalanche dropped two games to Fairbanks.

ALBERT LEA THUNDER: **Niko Kapetanovic** and **Danny Wood** scored for the Thunder in its only game of the weekend, a 3-2 loss to Owatonna on Friday.

ALEXANDRIA BLIZZARD: **Sean Kenny** and **Jon Swavely** each recorded a goal and an assist as the Blizzard fell to Owatonna on Saturday, 6-3.

ALPENA ICEDIGGERS: In the IceDiggers' only game of the week on Thursday, **Mike DeGrazia** tallied a pair of goals in a 5-1 win over Traverse City.

BISMARCK BOBCATS: Air Force recruit **David Bosner** made all 33 saves in the Bobcats' 2-0 win over North Iowa on Friday, marking his fourth shutout of the season.

FAIRBANKS ICE DOGS: Top Prospects Tournament selection **Jon Waggoner** recorded a hat trick, including the game-winning goal, in the Ice Dogs' 7-3 triumph over Alaska on Saturday.

KENAI RIVER BROWN BEARS: Top Prospects Tournament selection **Ryan Lemke** connected for three goals and four assists as the Brown Bears fashioned a 2-1 record against Wenatchee.

MAHONING VALLEY PHANTOMS: Forward **Jordy Trottier**, a Top Prospects Tournament selection from Bozeman, Mont., has committed to Bentley College (Atlantic Hockey) for next season.

MARQUETTE RANGERS: **Garrett Ladd**, a Top Prospects Tournament selection, notched a goal and two assists in the Rangers' 4-1 victory over Traverse City on Friday. He was also a plus-3.

MOTOR CITY MACHINE: Top Prospects Tournament selection **Josh Bussell**, Motor City's leading scorer, figured in all three Machine goals in its 6-3 loss to Mahoning Valley on Saturday (two goals, assist).

NORTH IOWA OUTLAWS: A plus-3 last weekend, **Jack Paul**, a Top Prospects Tournament selection, leads the league with a plus-25. "Jack is one of the most skilled forwards in the league and has made huge strides this season," said North Iowa head coach **Jeff Crose**. "He just keeps delivering for us."

OWATONNA EXPRESS: Goaltender **Jason Horstman** picked up two wins for the Express last weekend, turning aside 60 of 65 shots. He has won his last three starts.

SPRINGFIELD JR. BLUES: Top Prospects Tournament selection **Nick Curry** recorded both game-winning goals, including the overtime marker on Saturday, in the Jr. Blues' two-game sweep over Wichita Falls.

ST. LOUIS BANDITS: California native **Soren Jonzson** put home two goals and an assist as the Bandits forged a 0-0-2 record against Topeka.

TOPEKA ROADRUNNERS: **Bryce Merriam** was named the NAHL/GDI Goaltender of the Month for December after fashioning a 5-0-2 record in eight appearances to compliment a 1.75 goals-against average and a .937 save percentage.

TRAVERSE CITY NORTH STARS: **Nate Urbaniak** connected for two goals, including the game-winner, in the North Stars' 3-2 win over Marquette on Saturday. He was also a plus-3.

TEAM USA: **Emerson Etem** and **Jerry D'Amigo** each recorded two goals in the Under-17 Team's 9-1 victory over Mahoning Valley on Sunday.

WENATCHEE WILD: **Michael DiPuma** and **DJ Vandercook** (game-winner) each potted two goals in the Wild's 6-2 victory over Kenai River on Wednesday.

WICHITA FALLS WILDCATS: In his only game of the weekend on Saturday, defenseman **Matt Shost** recorded two assists in the Wildcats' 4-3 overtime loss to Springfield. He was also a plus-2.