

Photos by Jordy Villagomez



Keep your eyes on the puck

BY LEXIS SHULL
SPORTS EDITOR

As the only team in the Western Hockey League completely unbeaten at home (5-0,) the Portland Winterhawks battled the Seattle Thunderbirds on Saturday night, Nov. 2 at the Veterans Memorial Coliseum for a 2-1 win. After their previous win against the Everett Silvertips, the Hawks took the No. 1 spot in the western conference and are ranked at No. 4 overall in the combined western and eastern conference with 10 wins, 3 losses and 21 points.

The first goal of the game was scored at 8:54 by Johnny Ludvig, putting Portland up 1-0 with his eighth goal of the season. Reece Newkirk scored the second goal at 5:52 of the second period for a 2-0 lead with his fourth goal of the season. In the same period, Seattle scored at 13:21 and held the final score of 2-1.

Ludvig joined the Winterhawks in 2017 and is one of the team's captains this season. He said when he first joined it was a lot harder. "I came in at 17 and I'm 19 right now, so my 17 year old year was definitely a lot harder for me to play in the league but it's gotten easier over the years."

Center Jack O'Brian, a new addition to the Hawk family this season, has found his experience very similar to Ludvig's.

"I came from playing against kids that are my age around 16, so coming and playing against the guys that are 18, 19, 20, they're pretty much men so it's definitely a big change of pace in the game, but I'm starting to get used to it," O'Brian said.

The majority of Winterhawk players come from all over the country, some from Canada, and had to move to Portland to play for the team.

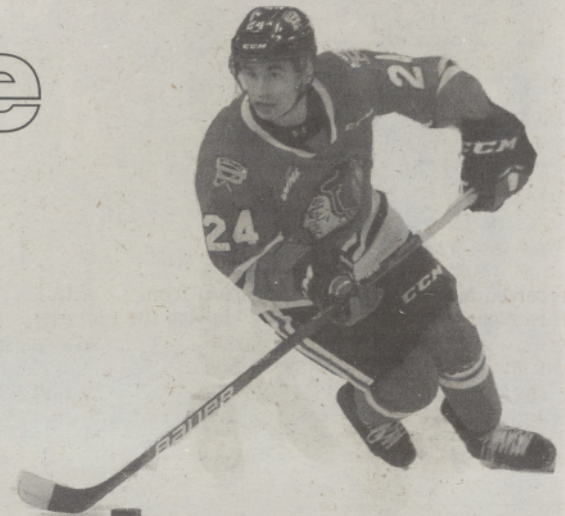
Leftwing Cross Hanas moved to Oregon from Highland Village, Texas.

"It's hard for a little bit when you first move away," Hanas said. "You miss family a bit, but after first the month it's fine."

James Stefan, rightwing, said, "It was honestly not that difficult because my dad also moved with me to Portland so it's been a nice move, but it's definitely different with a new school and new atmosphere. It's a lot different but I like it. I like the school with just all my teammates. It makes a lot easier and all the players are really nice and it's a good group of guys."

Though there are several ways to score a goal in hockey, there is always a favorite way to do so.

O'Brian said his perfect play would be, "...probably winning the face off clean,



putting the puck in the middle of the ice, moving it to the side just being a tic-tac-toe play and then backdoor it. That would be the perfect play for me."

Stefan, positioned as rightwing, had a different proposal. "A perfect play would be like a nice three on two. Maybe me heading the middle. We have a "dot play" where I come in and I give a downlow to the center and then him probably to the other winger backdoor. That'd be a perfect play."

Update: The Hawks also faced the Kamloops Blazers on Sunday in Portland with a 6-5 loss, placing them in 2nd behind Everett and losing their home game win streak. They play the Vancouver Giants in Canada on Friday and again on Saturday at home.

Tickets can be found on the Portland Winterhawks website at <https://winterhawks.com/>.