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Empire Junior Report: Friday, December 23, 2011

Volume 1 Issue 15 Week ending Sunday, December 18, 2011

Upcoming Weekend Games:

The Empire League will be on a two week break from league games. Everyone returns to action the weekend of January 7-8. We wish everyone a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year!

A complete schedule of league games can be found on line at:

<http://www.pointstreak.com/stats/pro/league/schedule.html?leagueid=362&seasonid=7391>

Visit the Empire Junior Hockey League at:

www.empirehockey.com

PLAYERS OF THE WEEK

This section will be used to promote our **Players of the Week**. Each week the League will select a Forward, Defense and Goaltender as Players of the Week.

Teams are to make nominations no later than Tuesday of each week by 6pm. Players of the Week will be announced on Friday's.

This week's Players are:

Goaltender: None nominated this week

Forward: Niall Caparon - Boston Bandits

Defense: Nick Centauro - Jr Bruins

See their write up's next page.

Congratulations to these fine players.

Make submissions, along with picture to Pete Preteroti at: SportsNiag@aol.com

PLAYERS OF THE WEEK (Week ending December 18, 2011)



Forward - Niall Caparon - Boston Bandits - 92 (Chesterfield, MO)

Niall had 4 points in the Bandits two games this week. He had two goals in helping the Bandits beat the Breakers for the Bandits sixth win in a row. He followed that with a goal and an assist against the Jr Bruins.



Defenseman - Nick Centauro - Junior Bruins - 95 (Mendon, MA)

Centauro's strong play in the month of December continued and was a big part of the B's perfect record in the month. With a short bench on Saturday and logging a lot of minutes against the Bandits top line Centauro helped keep two of the league's leading scorers in check with them figuring in on only one goal. At the halfway point of the season the Bruins lead the conference and are second in the league with a GAA of just 1.91 and Centauro has been a big part of that strong team defense.

Jr. Blades Palm Beach Weekend Recap



Estero, Fla.— The **Florida Jr. Blades** enter the holidays with an impressive 22-0-1-0 record after winning all four games at the Palm Beach Showcase.

The Jr. Blades began the weekend with a 7-4 victory over the rival Atlanta Knights. The Knights who handed the Jr. Blades their only loss (SO) earlier this season were only able to convert once in the first half. Meanwhile, Jr. Blades Joshua Koerner, DJ Thomas, Marcus Ortiz, Dan Thompson and Jon Davidson all found the back of the net.

“The energy and excitement that the team showcased at the first half of the Atlanta Knights game Friday helped propel the guys through the weekend,” says head coach Tad O’Had. “We were very happy with the contributions made on all four lines as well as the solid defensive play and strong goaltending.”

The Jr. Blades carried the momentum with them on Saturday defeating the Hampton Roads Whalers 4-1 and the East Coast Eagles 9-1. First-year Jr. Blades Dan Thompson, Marcus Ortiz and Chris Lepore were all strong contributors in the wins.

“Newcomers Marcus Ortiz, Chris Lepore and Dan Thompson had an outstanding weekend,” says O’Had. “The trio really began to gel together and give the line up an incredible amount of depth, finesse and grit.”

The scoring depth of the Jr. Blades roster continued to shine in the final game of the weekend. The Sunday rematch with the Hampton Roads Whalers saw Marcus Ortiz score the game winning goal at 22:55. Team captain James Hyatt added two insurance markers. While Jon Davidson completed a stellar weekend of play with the final tally of the 4-0 Jr. Blades victory.

“Jon Davidson’s play was superb, he hit everything in sight,” says O’Had. “He continues to define his role as one of the best two-way players in the league.”

Another standout was veteran goaltender Joe Keyser. The Albany, NY native stopped 124 of 130 shots including a shutout performance Sunday afternoon.

“Joe continues to be a work horse for the team,” says associate coach Jake Laime. “While we’re known for our offensive potency the team knows they have dependability in net. Joe’s athleticism and drive are unparalleled.”

Special Teams: The Jr. Blades penalty kill unit allowed only one PP goal the entire series (95.8 PK%). Meanwhile the power-play unit converted on nearly 30% of opportunities with the extra man advantage.

KOVACS NAMED ATHLETIC REPUBLIC STRENGTH & CONDITIONING ATHLETE OF THE MONTH



Estero, Fla.— The Florida Jr. Blades and Athletic Republic-Germain Arena are proud to announce Ross Kovacs as November’s Strength and Conditioning player of the month.

The Dickinson, North Dakota native is in his first-year with the Jr. Blades. Kovacs is a six-foot-two defenseman who anchors the Jr. Blades blue line. “There is a lot of North Dakota in Ross,” says head coach Tad O’Had. “He is a tough nosed kid that appreciates getting his hands dirty and being the best teammate he can be.” Kovacs dedication to personal development and the team did not go unnoticed and In November he was named alternate captain of the Florida Jr. Blades.

“What has impressed me most is how Ross has bought in to the importance of flexibility and regeneration work,” says assistant coach and Athletic Republic trainer Nick Westcott. “he knows doing the little things will ultimately translate to better performance on the ice.”

“Part of the draw of the Jr. Blades was the elite level training that Athletic Republic offers,” says Kovacs. “I come to practice with a goal and whether it’s stick handling or shooting drills I want to improve.”

Kovacs is a stable on the Jr. Blades power play unit and has recorded two-thirds of his assists with the man advantage. “Ross is arguably the best defensive defenseman in the league,” says O’Had.

Hitmen Trio To All-Star Weekend



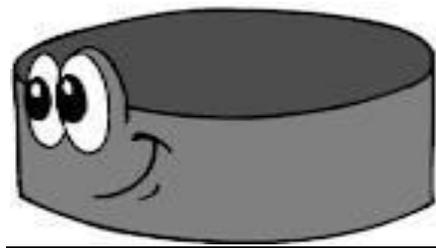
The **Jersey Hitmen** are pleased to announce that three team members will be representing the organization and the Western Conference in the Empire Junior Hockey League's All-Star weekend.

Lead the three Hitmen All-Stars to Hooksett, NH will be team captain Chris Fersini. Fersini is in his second year with the Hitmen and has blossomed from a fourth line role player last season to the team's leading scorer this year. The Hitmen captain currently holds a 15-22-37 line in 28 games played. Fersini, a resident of Basking Ridge, NJ is in his first year as a high school PG and was born on September 13, 1992

Joining Fersini in New Hampshire will be goaltender Matt Braun. For Braun this marks his second selection to the Western Conference All-Star team. Braun was an Empire League All-Star during the 2009-10 season before spending last season in the NA3HL. Braun has returned home to Jersey this year and has posted a 7-3-3 record to this point while boasting a 2.96 GAA and .916 save percentage. Braun is a native of Ramsey, NJ where he led his high school team to a NJ high school state Championship in 2010 was born on July 28, 1992.

The Hitmen trio also includes rookie defenseman Cody Calcagno. In his first season in the Empire Calcagno has been nothing short of stellar. Despite being the teams youngest defenseman he has been the leader of the team's defensive core. His durability and his ability to control all three zones of the ice has made him a very attractive prospect to numerous scouts. With a 2-15-17 line Calcagno is tied with his partner Matt DaSilva as the team's leading scoring defenseman. Born on June 12, 1995 the Ringwood, NJ native is not only the youngest defenseman on the Hitmen, but also the youngest defenseman voted to the Western Conference All-Star team.

The Empire League All-Star festivities will be held over two days at Tri-Town Arena in Hooksett, NH. The Western Conference will face off against the Eastern Conference at 4:00pm on January 15th before playing two games on Monday. Monday's schedule has the Western Conference facing off against the All-Stars from the Eastern States Hockey League at 9:30am and wrapping up the weekend with a contest against the Southern Conference All-Stars at 2:30pm.



Stars Sweep The Freeze



The **Syracuse Stars** were looking to close out 2011 with the best record in the Empire League. In order to accomplish that they would need to sweep the Frederick Freeze on home ice.

In Saturday's game four first period goals by the Stars were enough as they defeated the Freeze 11-1. Leading the Stars scoring attack were Alex Fuch and Luke Kirwan as each registered hat tricks. Also picking up single tallies were Alex Fukes, Alex Brink, Casie Garrison, Jesse Farabee, and Trent Yule. Nate Skidmore picked up his 7th win in nets.

The Stars continue their dominance over Empire League foes as they downed the Frederick Freeze again, 13-2 on Sunday. Ten different Stars hit the back of the net with Alex Brink picking up a hat trick and Ryan Perry getting a pair. Also tallying for the Stars were Casie Garrison, Taylor Furst, Luke Kirwan, Eric Kurz, Jeremy Marginsky, Alex Fuchs, Ben Engelbrekt, and Alex Tuch. Stars improve their league leading record to 23-7-0.

The Stars will enjoy the holiday break and will be back in action on Saturday,

Boston Bandits Split Over Weekend



The **Boston Bandits** hit the road this past weekend to take on division rivals Baystate Breakers and Boston Jr. Bruins. The Bandits riding a five game win streak that started with a win back on December 4 against the Breakers looked to continue their winning ways. The Bandits jumped all over the Breakers in the first two periods going up

6-1 but the Breakers made a charge of their own in the third. The Bandits outshot the Breakers 49-37 and would hold on for the win. **BANDITS 6 Breakers 5** Leading the way for the Bandits was Evan Jackson (94') and Niall Caparon (92') with 2 goals each, Paul Fregeau (93') had 1 goal 2 assists, Tyler Drevitch (95') had 3 assists and JB Sweeney (94') had 1 goal and 1 assist. Bandits stretch win streak to six games.

The Bandits then travel to Marlboro, MA to take on first place Boston Jr. Bruins. The game was exciting but had a lot of penalties. The Bandits ended the first period up 1-0 on a Paul Fregeau goal assisted by Tyler Drevitch and Niall Caparon. The Bandits playing well but took too many penalties. It would cost them as the Jr. Bruins strong power play unit took over the game and scored three goals to take a 3-1 lead. The Jr Bruins would add two more to go up 5-1. The Bandits would get a power play goal of their own by Caparon assists going to Mike McGovern (92') and JB Sweeney. Even though the Bandits outshot the Jr Bruins 29-26 the winning streak came to an end. **BANDITS 2 Jr Bruins 5**

Bandits look to continue climb in standings:

With the winning streak over the Bandits look to start a new one once the second half of the season starts. The Bandits ended the month of December 6-2, only losing to the first place Jr Bruins. The Bandits (11-10-2) sit in seventh place with one to three games in hand on all the teams above them.

Empire Bandits Tyler Drevitch called up to EJ for third time:

The Empire Bandits leading scorer got the call again to help the parent EJ Bandits team. Drevitch traveled to Springfield, MA to take on the EJ Pics. The Bandits won 6-5 and Tyler finished the game with one assist.

Up Coming Bandits Games:

After the holiday break the Bandits will be participating in the EJ Showcase in Marlboro, MA January 6th vs Atlanta 10:00AM and vs Texas Alliance 5:00PM, January 8th vs Metro Fighting Moose 10:00AM

The Empire South Report

Empire South teams took part this past weekend at the Palm Beach Hawks Junior Showcase. Here's a capsule look back at the games.

Friday, December 16th --

East Coast Eagles 5, Palm Beach Hawks 2

A 4 goal second half helped East Coast to the win. Josh Martinez scored twice and Scott Jackson made 23 saves for the Eagles. For Palm Beach, Jeremy Canonica and Vince Cook scored goals, Sean Shriner made 24 saves. East Coast was 2 for 3 on the power play, the Hawks were 2 for 7.

Hampton Roads Whalers 7, Florida Eels 3

A 5 goal Whaler second half broke open a tie game. Keegan Howver's 2 goals, 1 assist led Hampton Roads, Adam Loeffelman paced the Eels with 2 goals. Alan Johnson had 37 saves for the Whalers, who went 3 for 9 on the power play. For Florida, which went 1 for 5 on the power play, Jacob Widmer made 31 saves.

Florida Jr Blades 7, Atlanta Jr Knights 4

The Blades lit the lamp 5 times in the first half. DJ Thomas had 2 goals and 1 assist, Marcus Ortiz scored twice and Joseph Keyser made 38 saves for the Blades. For Atlanta, Cole Stallard had 2 goals, Sean Davis 44 saves. Florida went 3 for 8 on the power play and 7 of 8 on the penalty kill.

Tampa Bay Juniors 5, East Coast Eagles 1

Tampa Bay scored all five goals in the first half. Walter Stern, Joseph Fabec, Ryan Odgers, Patrick Rodgers and Nick Falbo scored goals for the Juniors, who got 25 saves from Kyle Gertz. Joshua Martinez scored once and Cody Smargiassi and Scott Jackson combined for 32 saves for the Eels. Tampa Bay was 0 for 7 on the power play, the Eels were 1 for 6.

Saturday, December 17th --

Florida Junior Blades 4, Hampton Roads Whalers 1

DJ Thomas scored twice and assisted once for the Blades and Joseph Keyser made 38 saves. Taylor Paasch scored for Hampton Roads, Grant Laughrey made 43 saves. There were no power play goals in the game, which had all the scoring coming in the first half.

Tampa Bay Juniors 6, Palm Beach Hawks 4

Tampa Bay outscored the Hawks 3-2 in both halves. Wade Simon had 2 goals and an assist for the Juniors, Aaron Wise made 23 saves. For Palm Beach, Tomothy Camden, Justin Anderson and John Smith had a goal and assist each, Stephen Sundberg made 30 saves. The Hawks were 1 for 3 on the power play and 2 of 2 on the penalty kill.

Atlanta Jr Knights 6, Space Coast Hurricanes 0

Justin Fisher scored twice and Taylor Brost made 15 saves for the Knights. Charles Ingram made 38 saves for Space Coast. Atlanta was 1 for 2 on the power play and 5 of 5 on the penalty kill.

East Coast Eagles 6, Florida Eels 1

A four-goal second half broke open the game for East Coast, which got a 1 goal, 2 assist effort from AJ Seffels and 32 saves from Spencer Braswell. Dominick Rovito scored for the Eels, Jacob Widmer and Travus McDonald combined for 36 saves. The Eagles were 2 for 7 on the power

play and 5 of 5 on the penalty kill.

Hampton Roads Whalers 6, Tampa Bay Juniors 3

A 3-1 advantage in the second half send the Whalers on to the win. For Hampton Roads, Ryan Abshear scored 2 goals and 1 assist, Justin Lindgren made 27 saves. For Tampa Bay, Nick Falbo, Ryan Odgers and Patrick Rodgers scored goals, Kyle Gertz had 34 saves. Each team was 0 for 1 on the power play.

Florida Eels 3, Space Coast Hurricanes 0

Jacob Widmer had 16 saves and Domick Rovito scored twice to lead the Eels. Charles Ingram had 32 saves for Space Coast. Eels were 2 for 5 on the power play and 3 of 3 on the penalty kill.

Atlanta Knights 4, Palm Beach Hawks 0

Atlanta scored 4 times in the first half and cruised to the win. Brandon scored twice, Richard Privette added 3 assists and Zachary Voskamp made 20 saves for the Knights. For Palm Beach, Bobby Dugan and Joey DiBiase combined for 35 saves. There were no power play goals.

Florida Junior Blades 9, East Coast Eagles 1

A 5-goal first half sent the Blades on their way to the win. Daniel Thompson had 2 goals and 1 assist for Florida, Troy Degler scored twice and Joseph Keyser was called on to make 17 saves. For the Eagles, Dakota Beaulieu scored the lone goal, while Scott Jackson and Spencer Braswell combined to make 56 saves. The Blades were 1 for 6 on the power play and 7 of 7 on the penalty kill.

Sunday, December 18th --

Florida Junior Blades 4, Hampton Roads Whalers 0

The Blades scored twice in each half. James Hyatt scored twice and Joseph Keyser made 31 saves for Florida. Grant Lauhrey made 34 saves for Hampton Roads. The Junior Blades were 3 for 6 on the power play and 6 of 6 on the penalty kill.

Palm Beach Hawks 4, Space Coast Hurricanes 0

A four goal second half sent Palm Beach to the win. Vince Cook scored twice for Palm Beach, Nick Mucerino added 3 assists, Justin Anderson and Brad Knight added a goal and assist each, while Joey DiBiase made 27 saves. Charles Ingram made 44 saves for Space Coast. The Hawks were 3 for 7 on the power play and 5 of 5 on the penalty kill.

The Empire South is now in their holiday break and resumes action on January 6th.



Here are some good Junior Blogs to follow:

USA Junior Hockey: <http://www.usacollegehockey.com/cgi-bin/UBBCGI/ultimatebb.cgi>

A great board for Junior Hockey discussion. I post in here all the time and am a moderator.

American Junior Hockey: <http://www.americanjuniorhockey.com/>

Please give us your feedback on this Newsletter and make sure to get it into the hands of your players and parents. This is only our first issue. It will only be as good as you make it. Make sure to keep news flowing in. sportsniag@aol.com

Pete Preteroti

On behalf of the Empire Junior Hockey League, I want to wish each of you a Very Merry Christmas and a Safe and Happy New Year. See you all in a few weeks.

Pete

AMERICA IS GREAT



GOD BLESS THE USA

