



DUCKS HOCKEY

Ducks Split Physical Weekend With Eastern Washington

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The Ducks went to Cheney, WA this past weekend for a 2-game series against Eastern Washington University Eagles. EWU is a new member of the PAC-8, resulting in these being the first conference games for the Ducks this year.

Friday's game started with a big offensive push from the Eagles, as the Ducks looked to shake off the van legs from their 8-hour drive. Despite the slow start, Ducks assistant captain, Nathan Lutz opened the scoring 4:23 into the first period with a nice rebound goal. Around the halfway mark in the first period, Ducks defenseman Zach Schultz took a hard hit into the boards and did not return to play the rest of the weekend. This led to the Ducks needing to shuffle lines and adjust for the second period and beyond.

A goal by Eastern's Matt Lucero at the 4:06 mark of the 2nd tied the game at 2, however the tie was quickly broken just 36 seconds later when Kirt Fortney tipped a Warren Berg shot to give the lead back to the Ducks. A back and forth period saw the Eagles tie the game once more before heading into the final frame.

The 3rd period was another entertaining one that had the Eagles and Ducks battling until the very end. A questionable roughing call on the Ducks put the Eagles on the power play with just 3 minutes remaining in the game. This eventually led to an Eastern goal, one that sealed the win for Eastern Washington.

Friday's disappointing ending led to a motivated Ducks squad on Saturday. The Ducks came out fast and had several scoring opportunities to start the game. Despite these chances, it was the Eagles that struck first at the halfway point. The Ducks continued to fight and were rewarded with a Connor Rendell goal with 43 seconds left in the period.

The Ducks took the momentum gained by the last minute goal and came out fast in the second period. Freshman Jack Geraghty continued his stellar preseason by netting his first regular season goal to put the Ducks up 2-1 just minutes into the period. Another back and forth period led to both teams getting plenty of power play opportunities, but neither could capitalize. The Ducks looked to go into the 3rd period with the lead, but a costly turnover led to an Eagles goal with just 1 second left on the clock.

Similar to Friday's game, this one would come down to the final minutes in what turned out to be a very competitive weekend for both teams. However, unlike Friday's game, the Ducks would be the one to win after Austin Charnholm scored his first ACHA goal from just outside the crease.

The Ducks and Eagles were very evenly matched throughout the weekend and will surely have many close battles in the future. The Ducks look to have a good week of practice this week before hosting the University of Washington Huskies in games 1 and 2 of the always popular I-5 Cup.