

## **WEEK 12**

## **RECAP**





The Yellowjackets and Monarchs, the two most penalized teams in the division, turned their matchup into an intense and physical showdown that at times resembled a demolition derby on ice. With bodies flying and tempers flaring, the officials had their hands full trying to maintain order. The Yellowjackets ultimately emerged victorious, 6-4, in a thrilling but bruising contest that left players and fans alike buzzing with energy - and perhaps a few bruises.

The Monarchs struck early, riding Matt McCourt and Alex Bernstein's efforts to build a 3-1 lead by the end of the first period. However, as the game progressed, the Yellowjackets found their rhythm and began chipping away at the deficit. Sean Taylor and John Petricig led the charge, combining for pivotal goals in the second and third periods. The Yellowjackets' ability to capitalize on the power play was key, with Eric Murray's tally midway through the final frame standing as a turning point.

While the Yellowjackets took home the win, the game's physicality raised eyebrows. A slew of penalties for roughing, high-sticking, and unsportsmanlike conduct highlighted the ongoing tension between these squads. With a rematch likely down the line, the referees will surely aim to clamp down early to keep things from boiling over. For now, though, the Yellowjackets can celebrate a hard-fought win that showed their resilience and ability to thrive in chaos.



Ever hear the phrase, "I wanna be like Mike?" Well, this was the perfect game for all the "Mikes" out there to shine. The Knights edged out the Mariners 7-6 in a goal fest dominated by players who shared not just

hockey skills but the same first name. From Mike Dwyer to Mike Ransom, it seemed like every big moment had a "Mike" stamp on it, leaving the crowd cheering for their favorite namesake.

The first period alone felt like a "Mike convention." Mike Dwyer got things rolling for the Knights, with Ryan Reale chipping in on a couple of beautiful assists. Not to be outdone, the Mariners' Mike Fay tallied one goal and an assist, teaming up with his brother (not Mike) Steve Fay for some sibling synergy. But just as the Mariners started to close the gap, Mike Coughlin and Mike Ransom combined for a dazzling Knights goal to close out the period, leaving fans wondering if there was something in the water - or the locker room - that gave Mike's the scoring edge.

The game's second and third periods continued the *Mike Show*, with Mike Coughlin adding another for the Knights and Nick Mayo keeping the Mariners alive. It was a nail-biter until the end, with the Knights' Ryan Reale (not Mike, but still brilliant) sealing the win with a last-minute goal in the second period that the Mariners couldn't overcome. It was a game to remember, particularly if your name is Mike - or you wish it were.



The Bulls' overtime woes continued Sunday night as they fell to the Threshers 4-3 in yet another heartbreaking extra-frame defeat. It marks the third overtime loss of the season for the Bulls, who seem to have mastered the art of snatching defeat from the jaws of victory. Despite earning at least a point in their last seven games, the Bulls are still on the outside of the playoff picture, clinging to faint postseason hopes that will require both wins and a little divine intervention.

The Bulls came out firing in the first period, with John Killion leading the charge. Killion struck twice, first with an unassisted beauty and then with a perfectly timed one-timer set up by Josh Tobias and Andy Cancellieri. Mike Connor added to the highlight reel with his first goal of the season, thanks to a nifty assist from Jason O'Connell. Up 3-0, the Bulls looked unstoppable heading into the second. But as fans of this season's Bulls have learned all too well, no lead is safe.

The Threshers stormed back, led by Eric Johnson, who tallied two goals to bring his season total to 11. The Bulls managed to hold on through regulation, but overtime once again proved to be their kryptonite. Just under one minute into the extra period, John Zimmer slipped through the defense to bury the game-winner for the Threshers. For the Bulls, it's another frustrating "almost," and with the playoff window narrowing, they'll need to find their overtime mojo fast if they want a shot at the postseason dance.

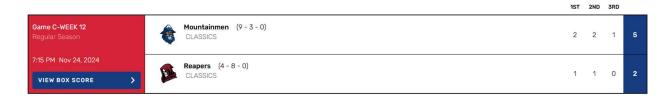




The Astros and Bolts put on a show for the ages, with the Bolts squeaking out a thrilling 5-4 overtime victory in a game that had everything—momentum swings, stellar goaltending, and a dramatic finish. Mark Vitello was the hero of the night, scoring twice, including the game-winner in overtime, to complete a sensational performance. Despite outshooting the Bolts 32-30, the Astros couldn't close the deal, continuing a streak of near-misses in tight games.

The first period was a frenzy, with three goals in under five minutes. Art Riccio opened the scoring for the Bolts on the power play with an unassisted snipe, but the Astros roared back. Mike Fuller tied it with help from Andrew Mellen and Paul Murphy, and John Ruzzano added another off a slick feed from Mellen. The Astros carried the lead into the second, but the Bolts' Vitello struck back, tying the game with a solo effort that electrified the crowd.

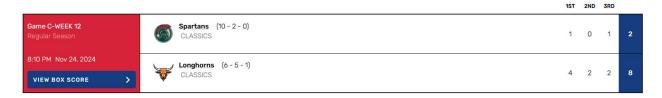
In the third, the teams traded blows like heavyweight prizefighters. Fuller and Des Walsh scored for the Astros, but Riccio and Vitello answered for the Bolts, with the latter knotting the game at 4-4 in the final minute. Overtime didn't last long, as Vitello iced it less than two minutes in, assisted by Jamie Jernegan. For the Bolts, it's a gutsy win that keeps their momentum alive. For the Astros, it's another bitter pill, but they showed they can hang with anyone.



The Mountainmen climbed high and stood tall, defeating the Reapers 5-2 in a dominant performance that showcased their scoring depth and defensive discipline. Led by the unstoppable Jim Daniels, who notched a hat trick and an assist, the Mountainmen outshot and outpaced the Reapers in a game that felt like a playoff preview. With strong goaltending from Ron Hughes and a lockdown third period, the Mountainmen sent a clear message to the league.

The first period saw both teams trading blows, with Eric Morgan opening the scoring for the Reapers on a precision feed from Brook Conley. But the Mountainmen's Jim Daniels took over, scoring twice in just over a minute to give his team a 2-1 lead. Assisted by Pat Scully and Chris O'Keefe, Daniels showcased his knack for being in the right place at the right time, a theme that would persist throughout the night.

In the second, Daniels completed his hat trick with a game-winning goal, capitalizing on a perfect setup from O'Keefe and Greg McKenna. Sean Cannon pulled one back for the Reapers with an unassisted effort, but Chris O'Keefe struck back in the final seconds of the frame. Daniels added a fourth Mountainmen goal early in the third to seal the victory. The Reapers couldn't recover as Hughes made crucial stops to keep the Mountainmen firmly in control. It was a statement win for the Mountainmen, who now sit in prime position to make a deep postseason run.



The Longhorns delivered a birthday gift for the ages to their player of the game, Mike "Not as Young as He Looks" Zucarelli, as they emphatically ended the Spartans' nine-game winning streak with an 8-2 victory. Zucarelli, celebrating his 80th birthday, proved that age is just a number, orchestrating his team's attack with poise and vision. It was a fitting tribute to the veteran who has been the heart of the Longhorns for decades.

The Longhorns set the tone early, scoring four times in a dominant first period, with Ed Mortell leading the charge with a goal and two assists. Bob Sideropoulos netted the game-winner, capping a relentless offensive onslaught that saw the Longhorns outshoot the Spartans 18-3 in the opening frame. The Spartans, despite a valiant effort from Paul Brinkmann and Rich Boyle, couldn't find their rhythm against a Longhorns team firing on all cylinders. Doc Smith was a brick wall in goal, turning aside 22 shots to frustrate the Spartans' offense.

Zucarelli, ever the crafty playmaker, orchestrated the Longhorns' attack like a maestro conducting a symphony, reminding everyone why he's a legend in the league. As his teammates celebrated around him post-game, Mike quipped, "I might be 80, but I can still hang with the young guys like JC." If this performance is any indication, Zucarelli isn't done yet—and the Longhorns look like a team ready to make a serious run.



The Hawks soared to a decisive 7-2 victory over the Fury, leaving no doubt about their dominance in all three zones. With a blend of relentless offense and rock-solid goaltending from Barry Kaiser, the Hawks overwhelmed the Fury early and never looked back. Shawn Malloy's standout performance, featuring two goals and two assists, powered the Hawks to their most complete game of the season.

The Hawks set the tone in the first period, racking up three quick goals, including the eventual game-winner from John Davey, who capitalized on a slick setup by Jim McNeill. While the Fury responded with two quick strikes late in the period, including a laser from Steve Lemish, they struggled to generate consistent

momentum against the Hawks' high-pressure forecheck. By the second period, the Hawks pulled away further, with Paul Cavan and Frank Elwood adding to the onslaught, much to the dismay of Fury goaltender Dan Nason, who faced a barrage of 29 shots.

In the final frame, the Hawks put the exclamation point on their win with goals from Ted Duggan and Malloy, capping a dominant all-around effort. Meanwhile, Barry Kaiser stood tall between the pipes, turning away 20 shots and preserving the Hawks' five-goal margin. With this commanding win, the Hawks send a clear message to the league: their offense is firing on all cylinders, and they're a team to be reckoned with. The Fury, meanwhile, will need to regroup quickly to avoid a spiral after this tough loss.