



## JEFFREY LUTZ'S ECHL REPORT

### Scoring surge

Wichita was one shot away from a six-point weekend even though the Thunder surrendered 14 goals in three games.

The Thunder produced its most prolific stretch of offense with 15 goals in three games, beating Missouri and Allen 5-4 before losing 6-5 in a shootout to the Americans on Sunday. Wichita had three games of five goals or more in the previous 45 games and the highest three-game output was 12.

Allen rallied to beat the Thunder on Sunday after trailing 5-3 with less than five minutes to go.

"We're scoring," Thunder coach Kevin McClelland said. "But when it's 5-3, we've got to shut that game down. We just didn't make the plays on the back end."

As it has been for the Thunder in its most successful seasons under McClelland, scoring has been a team effort. Ten players have between 21 and 44 points and other players have made contributions in more limited time.

One of those players is Justin Bernhardt, who went scoreless in his first four games after being acquired at the end of last month but scored twice in Friday's win against Missouri before delivering a hat trick in Saturday's win at Allen.

Bernhardt missed nearly a month after leaving his team in Germany this season. He has never played in more than 47 games in a professional season but he scored 92 points in his final year of junior hockey.

"He's played in the (ECHL),

he's familiar with it," McClelland said. "He didn't put up great numbers, but if you look at that team in Las Vegas (last season), the leading scorer only had (45) points. It was a defensive-minded hockey team and he was up there with the leaders in scoring, so you know he can score a little bit."

### Around the ECHL

■ Brampton forward Chad Painchaud scored nine goals in three games between Feb. 10 and 14. Painchaud, who played for the Thunder in 2012-13, helped the Beast go 2-1 at Rapid City by scoring two, four and three goals in succession. Two, four, and three represented Painchaud's goal totals for the previous three months.

■ Goaltender Chris Driedger became the first Evansville player promoted to the NHL when the Ottawa Senators called him up following a pair of injuries last week. Driedger is 2-15 since Dec. 27 but beat the Thunder in a 5-3 Evansville win on Jan. 10.

### ECHL alumni

Daniel Gauthier, father of Thunder forward Danick Gauthier, played 61 games for Knoxville in his rookie season, 1990-91, and scored 134 points. Daniel Gauthier played most of his career in Europe, but he appeared in five games for the NHL's Chicago Blackhawks in 1994-95. Danick Gauthier made his professional debut in 2012, two years after his father retired.

### Days gone by

Before earning the NHL's Blue Jackets for the 2000 season, Columbus, Ohio, housed the ECHL's Chill. The Chill's first coach was Terry Ruskowski, who is in his second season as coach of Quad City. The Chill made five playoff appearances while playing in the ECHL from 1991-99, but never escaped the second round.

### Team profile

The Wheeling (W.Va.) Nailers are an original ECHL franchise but have gone through multiple reformations, starting as the Carolina Thunderbirds before adopting their home city, Winston-Salem, as part of their name. After four seasons as the Wheeling Thunderbirds, they became the Nailers in 1996. They've made eight playoff appearances in 18 seasons with no championships.

### Key statistic: 10,490

The attendance at Intrust Bank Arena for Friday's Thunder game against Missouri, the franchise's third-biggest draw.

### He said it

"We had some mental errors there. We didn't control our zone. There were a few turnovers that we could've gotten out of the zone and caused some better things to happen for us.

— Thunder captain Ian Lowe on Allen's Sunday comeback

### Wednesday's game

Todd Hosmer scored in the seventh round of the shootout, giving the Thunder a 6-5 win over the Americans in Allen, Texas.

Ian Duval had a pair of goals, and Justin Bernhardt and Danick Gauthier had a goal and an assist for the Thunder. Duval's second goal put the Thunder ahead 5-3 at 10:21 of the third, but Allen made it 5-4 just over a minute later.

Allen forced overtime when Gary Steffes scored with one second left in the third period. Wichita survived a penalty in overtime, then won the shootout 2-1. Gauthier scored the first shootout goal.

Wichita	21	2	0	1	—	6
Allen	12	2	0	0	—	5

**First period** — 1, Wichita, Duval 8 (Kashirsky, Walker), 2:50. 2, Allen, Steffes 32 (Costello, Ludwig), 7:07 (pp). 3, Wichita, Tulupov 5 12:26. **Penalties** — Asuchak, Aln (interference), 0:14; Gens, Aln (tripping), 3:19; Milan, Wic (tripping), 6:34; Duval, Wic (high-sticking), 8:22; Walker, Wic (roughing), 9:54; Asuchak, Aln (unsportsmanlike conduct), 9:54; Milan, Wic (high-sticking), 16:23; Schaafsma, Aln (slashing), 17:42; Miller, Wic (holding the stick), 18:26. **Second period** — 4, Allen, Baker 8 (Hanson, Schaafsma), 2:36. 5, Allen, Costello 25 (Follmer, Clarke), 12:53. 6, Wichita, Bernhardt 6 (Gauthier, Wilson), 17:43 (pp). **Penalties** — Tulupov, Wic (tripping), 0:23; Barr, Aln (roughing), 3:18; Clarke, Aln (roughing), 7:40; Flath, Wic (unsportsmanlike conduct), 8:19; Gens, Aln (elbowing), 9:23; MacIntyre, Wic (slashing), 14:46; Valcak, Aln (hooking), 17:07; Hosmer, Wic (unsportsmanlike conduct), 19:07; Clarke, Aln (cross-checking), 19:07. **Third period** — 7, Wichita, Gauthier 20 (Lowe, Bernhardt), 7:56 (pp). 8, Wichita, Duval 9 (Milan), 10:21. 9, Allen, Hanson 17 (Baker, Asuchak), 11:40. 10, Allen, Steffes 33 (Asuchak, Costello), 19:59 (ea). **Penalties** — Clarke, Aln (too many men), 4:58; Ludwig, Aln (slashing), 6:10; Schaafsma, Aln (high-sticking), 7:38. **Overtime** — none. **Penalty** — Bernhardt, Wic (holding), 2:23. **Shootout** — Wichita 2 (Bernhardt NG, Kashirsky NG, Lowe NG, Gauthier G, Flath NG, Duval NG, Hosmer G), Allen 1 (Schaafsma NG, Steffes NG, Costello NG, Asuchak NG, Hanson G, Ludwig NG, Folltik NG). **Shots** — Wichita 9-17-10-1-1—38, Allen 7-9-11-3-0—30. **Power plays** — Wichita 2 for 9, Allen 1-8. **Goalies** — Wichita, Boron 30 shots, 25 saves; Allen, Gill 37-32. **T** — 2:47. **A** — 3,358.

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