



GAME NOTES



Rockford IceHogs
(0-0-0-0)

0 points
(T-1st, Central)

Friday, Oct. 4
7 p.m. CST

Wells Fargo Arena • Des Moines, IA
Game #1 • RFD Series (2018-19) 4-5-0-1

Iowa Wild
(0-0-0-0)

0 points
(T-1st, Central)



BACON BITS

LAST GAME:

» Luke Johnson brought the Rockford IceHogs within one goal midway through the third period, but the late rally fell one tally short as Rockford capped the 2018-19 regular season with a 3-2 loss to the Milwaukee Admirals on April 14 at the BMO Harris Bank Center.

INJURY REPORT:

» N/A

ICEHOGS VS. OPPONENT SERIES NOTES

- » Rockford capped the 2018-19 season with wins in two of the final three meetings of the series.
- » The IceHogs were shut out in three straight games by the Wild for the first time in franchise history last season from from Nov. 7 - Jan. 4.
- » Rockford averaged 3.0 goals/game at home in the series against the Wild last season, but were limited to just 1.0 goals/game on the road (scored one or no goals in four of five road games at Iowa in 2018-19).
- » The Hogs have tallied three hat tricks against the Wild since the 2017-18 season (Highmore-2 in 2017-18, Nilsson- 1 in 2018-19).

GAME NOTES

ONE-HIT WONDER

The Hogs and Wild have not played to a one-goal game in Iowa since the 2017-18 season. Each of the last seven meetings in Iowa in the series have been settled by two or more goals, with the last one-goal game occurring in a 2-1 Wild victory on Feb. 10, 2018. Further, the two teams have gone 10 straight matchups at Wells Fargo Arena without reaching overtime (the last OT game in Iowa was 2-1 Rockford win on Oct. 25, 2017).

OH CAPTAIN, MY CAPTAIN

The IceHogs named their first captain in three years when head coach Derek King announced Kris Vertseeg as captain for 2019-20. This marks the first time in Versteeg's 14-year pro career in North America in which he has worn a letter. Versteeg is Rockford's 11th captain during the team's AHL affiliation and first since Jake Dowell wore the "C" for a team-record third season in 2016-17 (Dowell was also captain in 2009-10 and 2015-16). In addition, the Hogs also named the following forwards as alternate captains: Matthew Highmore (also wore "A" in 2018-19, named team's Rookie of the Year in 2017-18), Tyler Sikura (also wore "A" in 2018-19, named Team MVP in 2017-18 and Unsung Hero in 2018-19) and Jacob Nilsson (first season with a letter for Rockford, named teams' MVP in 2018-19).

SEE YOU AT THE FINISH LINE

The IceHogs enter Friday's opener with a record of 8-10-1-1 in their 20 previous season-opening games, including 4-6-1-1 during AHL affiliation. Rockford has reached the postseason in seven of eight seasons in which the team has won the first game of the season. The lone exception is the 2011-12 campaign when Rockford defeated Grand Rapids 3-2 in the season opener and finished last in the Midwest Division.

DRAFT KINGS

The IceHogs' Opening Day roster features 17 former NHL draft picks. That total includes the following picks: 1st round (2 players), 2nd round (1 player), 3rd round (3 players), 4th round (4 players), 5th round (2 players), 6th round (3 players), 7th round (2nd round). In addition, of the 17 draft picks, 12 were originally selected by the Chicago Blackhawks.

1ST AND 7

Seven players are set to make their AHL debut when they take the ice for the first time with the IceHogs. That list includes forwards MacKenzie Entwistle, Mikael Hakkarainen, Tim Soderlund and Anton Wedin and defensemen Nicolas Beaudin, Adam Boqvist and Jack Ramsey. Last season, 17 skaters (eight forwards, eight defensemen and one goaltender) made their AHL debut with the IceHogs.

ROOKIE MOVE

In addition to players making their AHL debut, the IceHogs also feature 13 rookies on their Opening Day roster. Last season, IceHogs rookies produced 41.3 percent of the team's total offense with 16 different rookies combining for a total of 203 points. Rockford concluded the 2018-19 season with seven rookies posting double-digit point totals.

KING ME

Derek King is entering his first full season as head coach of the IceHogs. King served as an assistant coach in the AHL with Toronto (2009-14) and Rockford (2016-18) prior to taking over behind the bench on an interim basis on Nov. 6, 2018. He led Rockford to a 29-28-3-4 record as interim head coach last season.

SAVE THE DATE

The IceHogs trio of netminders in Collin Delia, Anton Forsberg and Kevin Lankinen combined to help the IceHogs post the second-best save percentage in the AHL. Rockford's .913 save percentage trailed only Syracuse's .916 for the best mark in the league. Two of the Hogs' three netminders from 2018-19 return in Delia and Lankien, with Delia finishing last season ranked second among qualified netminders with a save percentage of .922 over his 26 AHL outings.