



ICEHOGS STRESS “PACE” THROUGH SEASON’S EARLY STAGES



Head coach Jeremy Colliton has stressed tempo and “pace” through the early stages of the 2017-18 campaign. The IceHogs roster boasts several speedy skaters, and both Colliton and his team are focused on implementing a game plan around that attribute.

“It’s just the way we want to play,” said IceHogs points leader, Matthew Highmore. “Playing with pace isn’t necessarily just using your legs; it’s moving the puck as well. the better we can do that the more chances we can generate.”

Employing that “pace” on the ice, Rockford entered the third week of the regular season ranked second in the AHL in shots per game (35.33) and tied for third in overall scoring with 4.67 goals per game. The team also scored seven goals for the first time in two years during a 7-4 victory over the Iowa Wild on Oct. 14.

“The goal is to give (a full effort) for a full 60 minutes,” said Colliton. “We want (the team) to make plays, be aggressive with the puck and try to attack. We have to find a way to bring a level of desperation, an urgency to the pace of play every period.”

HIGHMORE ENJOYING EARLY SUCCESS



Rockford rookie forward Matthew Highmore has tallied at least one point in each of his first three professional games, and currently leads the IceHogs in points. His five total points thus far also rank second among all AHL rookies entering the weekend.

“It’s been a great start,” said Highmore. “We’ve been working hard the last couple of weeks...and we hope to keep it going.”

Highmore has continued his torrid scoring pace from his final year of juniors in 2016-17, when he ranked first on Saint John in points (89) and assists (55) and helped lead the team to a Quebec Major Junior Hockey League championship.

Highmore, who served as an alternate captain during the title-winning campaign, scored a goal and an assist in IceHogs debut at Cleveland on Oct. 10, tallied two goals Oct. 14 vs. Iowa and registered an assist Oct. 15 vs. Milwaukee.

“I have to credit my line mates...(the team) has done a great job of kind of coming together,” said Highmore. “It’s been a lot of fun and a good learning experience so far.”

RADDYSH, DEBRINCAT CONTINUE DEVELOPMENT TOGETHER



Darren Raddysh acknowledged the transition from amateur to pro is a difficult adjustment, but having a familiar face in the fold has made a great deal of difference for rookies Raddysh and his former OHL teammate Alex DeBrincat. Both skaters began the 2017-18 season in the Chicago Blackhawks organization, Raddysh with Rockford and DeBrincat in Chicago.

“It was nice to see (DeBrincat) do as well as he did at the start of the season...when I first signed with Chicago, or even Rockford, it was a lot easier knowing that I have someone there that I trust and I can talk to and lean on if I need something,” said Raddysh.

Although the duo currently plays at different levels within the organization, they continue to motivate and support one another just the same.

“At development camp we roomed together, and at Traverse City (Prospect Tournament) we were hanging out a lot,” said Raddysh, “To see (DeBrincat) make the (Blackhawks) is something I’ve wished upon him since he was drafted.”

DeBrincat currently has 1g-3a-4pts with the Blackhawks, while Raddysh netted his first pro goal Oct. 15 vs. Milwaukee.