

## **GAME REPORT**

Home: CV Firebirds vs. Away: CGY Wranglers

Date: Dec 14, 2024 6:00PM PST

### **Pre-Game**

The Wranglers have the best record in the AHL. The last three seasons the Wranglers have been a top contender for the Pacific Division. They have several players in the top AHL scoring and goaltending categories. Their NHL affiliate, Calgary Flames, have not fared as well. There are several AHL callups to the NHL to address injuries. This will be the first of 3 games on the road this week before heading home for 2 games before the Christmas break.

The Firebirds find themselves on a losing streak. They went 0-2-0-1 against the San Jose Barracuda this past week. The losses were close games where the Firebirds stayed competitive. The Firebirds currently sit 4<sup>rd</sup> in the Pacific Division with teams around them separated by 1 point. Injuries and callups to the NHL have prompted call ups from the ECHL affiliate Mavericks to the Firebirds.

Head-to-Head: The Wranglers won the opening game of the season against the Firebirds by the score of 3 – 1. The Firebirds were in the game and had chances to score, but it was the second game of the season for the Firebirds. Overall, the Firebirds have the better record in the last 2 seasons including the playoffs. This is the first of two games to be played this weekend. The season is still young so these two games will be an important test to see how well each team is coming together.

### **1<sup>st</sup> Period**

The Firebirds came out with solid play and scored the first goal in 31 seconds. The Firebirds continued to press with some creative shots for a few more minutes. The play turned to a fast passed back and forth for most of the period. The Wranglers attempted the back door play a couple times. Didn't score unlike the first meetup, but they were able to get the Firebirds trapped on the ice. A mishandled puck landed in the slot and put home to tie the game. The Firebirds had a better 1<sup>st</sup> period in a long while. Playing the top team in the division and the league brings out the better play.

### **2<sup>nd</sup> Period**

The Firebirds plated a solid period, but not without penalty issues. Within the first 2 minutes, the Wranglers were on the power play, but did something a little odd. Firebirds won the puck and took it behind the net while the Wranglers did a line change. With some precise passing, the Firebirds got a breakaway shorthanded goal. It was a great play off a poor line change. Near the half way point the Firebirds got a nifty 3<sup>rd</sup> goal on even strength. The Wranglers would go on the power play two more times in the period, but the Firebirds played a strong defense. This was the best physical game the Firebirds have played this year. More body checking separating the player from the puck. The Firebirds are also winning more faceoffs, which is giving them more control of the play. The Wranglers are playing well too. The Wranglers are working the puck to open players, but the shots are blocked or stop by the goalie. We will see how spirited both teams come out in the 3<sup>rd</sup> period.

### 3<sup>rd</sup> Period

There were no goals scored in the period, but it was a defensive physical grind for both sides. The Wranglers did press a little, but the Firebirds stood tall.

### Post-Game

What a difference a couple months makes! The Firebirds have developed that chemistry discussed earlier in the season. The best team in the league brought out the best play in the Firebirds. This appears to be one of the times the faceoff wins made a difference. Of course, it wouldn't be a Firebirds win without a 6 on 4 penalty kill with the Wranglers goalie pulled in the last 2 minutes of the game. Wranglers are a slightly faster skaters, but the Firebirds won the puck battles on the board and got to the right places to intercept or block pucks. Unlike other teams, the Wranglers didn't show frustration. They continued to grind to make a comeback, which is a sign of a winning team. Tomorrow is game starts a little earlier, and it should be good battle between these two teams.

	1 <sup>st</sup>	2 <sup>nd</sup>	3 <sup>rd</sup>	OT	Total
<b>Wranglers</b>	1	0	0		1
<b>Firebirds</b>	1	2	0		3

Full game statistic can be found on the AHL site: <https://theahl.com/stats/game-center/1026838>

### Team Game Stats:

	Wranglers	Firebirds
<b>Shots</b>	34	20
<b>PP</b>	0 / 4	0 / 2
<b>PIM</b>	4	8
<b>SH</b>	0	1

### Unofficial stats:

The following are unofficial statistics. The AHL doesn't show faceoff wins, icing, or offsides on the score sheet. I am tracking this on my own so there is a margin of error.

	Icing	Offside
Wranglers	2	1
Firebirds	3	2

Faceoff Wins	1 <sup>st</sup>	2 <sup>nd</sup>	3 <sup>rd</sup>	Total
Wranglers	8	5	3	16
Firebirds	6	10	5	21

The following is a breakdown of faceoff wins based on zone and player count.

Zone	Wranglers			Firebirds		
	ES	PP	PK	ES	PP	PK
<b>Attack</b>	6	1	0	3	3	0
<b>Neutral</b>	6	0	0	3	0	0
<b>Defense</b>	3	0	0	9	0	3

*Seanliming.com*

ES – Even Strength

PP – Power Play

PK – Penalty Kill