

## GAME REPORT

Home: CV Firebirds vs. Away: SD Gulls

Date: Oct 10, 2025 7:00PM PST

### Pre-Game – Season Opener

Happy New Hockey Season! A new season brings changes. The Kraken have a new coach implementing a new system to generate more scoring and create a better defensive structure. For the Firebirds this means some players are getting a chance to start the season wearing a Kraken sweater. Jani Nyman and Ryan Winter had a great preseason to earn a spot on the roster. Veteran Cale Fleury will join them to start the season. The Kraken had the season opener at home against the Anaheim Ducks and won for the first time in a season opener.

With the Kraken roster set, the Firebirds have many returning players and some new faces that are working their way up through the Kraken system. 12 players are returning from last year, and 11 players are joining the team or are getting full time with the Firebirds this year. Only 5 players are signed to an AHL contract. All others have the two-way NHL/AHL contract. With the NHL having a compressed schedule for the Olympics, expect to see players cycle up and down throughout the season. One player that will be missed in captain Max McCormick who is out for the season after hip surgery. The team is comprised of many 2nd and 1st year players making the Firebirds the youngest team in the AHL. There will be some growing pains this season.

Tonight, the Firebirds will play the Anaheim Ducks AHL affiliate the San Diego Gulls, which is fitting as the NHL teams played last night. The Ducks and Kraken organizations are starting fresh with new head coaches so we should see some changes with the AHL affiliates.

### Head-to-Head:

The Firebirds took the season series with a 5-1-2-0 record. The Gulls were 3-2-3. Historically, the Firebirds have dominated the Gulls in head-to-head play. Last year, the Gulls came to play. In the first game, the Firebirds staved off a Gull's comeback up 6 to 1 to win the game 6 to 5. The rest of the season was a battle. The Firebirds finished 4<sup>th</sup> in the Pacific to get into a playoff spot, but lost to eventual Calder Cup winner Abbotsford. The Gulls finished 9<sup>th</sup> and then enjoyed the summer. All the past results are meaningless once the puck drops at Acrisure Arena.

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

SD had the most shots on goal and attack ice time, but most shots were outside. The Firebirds taking 2 penalties in the period didn't help. The penalty kill created chaos for the Gulls offense. Kokko was on his game most of the period or the Gulls would have had a couple of goals. With 20 seconds remaining, the Gulls Ryan Carpenter snuck a puck in a scramble in the paint. Firebirds did have some grade A chance with their attacks.

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

Kokko can only do so much. The Gulls took it to the Firebirds. The Firebirds allowed to easy zone entries, not able to get out of the D-zone, and standing around on defense. The new system looks like a 2-1-2, but the players are not sure what to do at this point. The Gulls were skating through the defense as obstacles and getting too easy shots. The Firebirds had a couple of chances with one shot of the post and a 3 on 1 that ended with a bad pass. The Gulls goals were down and dirty in the paint. Tim Washe got a pass down low from Travis Howe and flipped it over Kokko. Judd Caulfield tallied a score half way throw the period.

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

The Gulls kept coming. Firebirds had sparks of a push, but only generated a couple of quality chances. Gulls scored the 4<sup>th</sup> goal in the first 5 minutes, and the 5<sup>th</sup> goal was cored have way through the period. The Firebirds did get a power play chance, but couldn't convert.

### Post-Game

The Gulls start the season strong. Their forecheck created problems for the Firebirds who couldn't get out of the D-zone. The positive news for the Firebirds was the penalty kill was perfect, but the rest of the effort needs work. It is game one. 71 more games to go. Both teams are off for a week to get retooled and refreshed. San Diego will host the Henderson Silver Knights for their home opener. The Firebirds will host Colorado Eagles next Saturday.

|                  | 1 <sup>st</sup> | 2 <sup>nd</sup> | 3 <sup>rd</sup> | OT | Total |
|------------------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|----|-------|
| <b>Gulls</b>     | 1               | 2               | 2               |    | 5     |
| <b>Firebirds</b> | 0               | 0               | 0               |    | 0     |

Full game statistic can be found on the AHL site: <https://theahl.com/stats/game-center/1027774>

Video highlights can be seen on the Firebirds' YouTube channel: [Firebirds - YouTube](#)

### Team Game Stats:

|              | <b>Gulls</b> | <b>Firebirds</b> |
|--------------|--------------|------------------|
| <b>Shots</b> | 44           | 26               |
| <b>PP</b>    | 0 / 4        | 0 / 1            |
| <b>PIM</b>   | 2            | 8                |
| <b>SH</b>    | 0            | 0                |

### 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.

| <b>Icing</b> | 1 <sup>st</sup> | 2 <sup>nd</sup> | 3 <sup>rd</sup> |  | <b>Total</b> |
|--------------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|--|--------------|
| Gulls        | 0               | 3               | 2               |  | 5            |
| Firebirds    | 2               | 1               | 4               |  | 7            |

| Offsides  | 1 <sup>st</sup> | 2 <sup>nd</sup> | 3 <sup>rd</sup> |  | Total |
|-----------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|--|-------|
| Gulls     | 0               | 1               | 0               |  | 1     |
| Firebirds | 0               | 0               | 0               |  | 0     |

| Faceoff Wins | 1 <sup>st</sup> | 2 <sup>nd</sup> | 3 <sup>rd</sup> |  | Total |
|--------------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|--|-------|
| Gulls        | 11              | 11              | 10              |  | 32    |
| Firebirds    | 8               | 5               | 14              |  | 27    |

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

|         | Gulls |    |    | Firebirds |    |    |
|---------|-------|----|----|-----------|----|----|
| Zone    | ES    | PP | PK | ES        | PP | PK |
| Attack  | 14    | 5  | 0  | 12        | 0  | 0  |
| Neutral | 6     | 0  | 0  | 5         | 0  | 0  |
| Defense | 5     | 0  | 2  | 8         | 0  | 2  |

ES – Even Strength

PP – Power Play

PK – Penalty Kill