

GAME REPORT

Home: CV Firebirds vs. Away: CGY Wranglers

Date: April 26, 2025 6:00PM PST

Calder Cup Round 1 Game 2 – Firebirds lead series 1 - 0

Pre-Game

The first game took triple overtime to get a result. Tonight's game 2 should be just as exciting. In a best of 3 series, the Wranglers now have their backs against the wall. If they win, the deciding game will be on Sunday. If they lose, it will be the 3rd year in a row that the Firebirds have eliminate the Wranglers. The Firebirds have a young team, and the Wranglers are taking advantage by getting under the skin of certain Firebirds. Jani Nyman was a target in the last game. Ty Tullio tussled with Jani before a face off. The referees had enough and put both of them into the penalty box for unsportsmanlike conduct. The 4-on-4 opened up the ice. The result was the Wranglers getting their second goal with 5 minutes to go in the 3rd period. The Wranglers tied it up with 7 seconds to play. In the end, it was the youthful Firebirds team that took over the overtime periods and got the win. With 3-days rest between games 1 and 2, tonight's game will be a character builder for either team.

1st Period

If there were nerves in game one, they are gone. Both teams came out with strong forecheck, speed, and physical play worthy of a playoff game. Both teams got a chance on the power play, but neither could get anything going. No score in the first period.

2nd Period

The aggressiveness continued. Both teams are making hits and block shots. Firebirds broke the scoreless tie on the rush. Nathan Villeneuve got free, but had to wait for help. Mitchell Stephens coming late into the attacking zone got Nathans feed and fired it home. Waltteri Ignatjew wasn't able to spot it in time. The arena went crazy and for the remaining 5 minutes it was a little bedlam as both teams up the pace even more.

3rd Period

Both teams continued to played aggressive, but the Firebirds had the edge in the O-zone time. Firebirds killed off an early penalty kill. They followed up the rest of the period with a strong forecheck, clogging up the neutral zone, hustle to get to lose pucks, and playing physical. The Wranglers have a veteran group, and they had some chances. The Firebirds defense was able to clear out pucks. With 17 seconds to go, John Hayden recovered a puck in the neutral zone to finished off the game with an empty net goal. The arena went nuts. After the clock hit zero and final buzzer sounded, the song during the handshakes was Maxine Nightingale's "Right Back Where We Started From".

Post-Game

No over time! For the 3rd straight year, the Firebirds eliminated the Wranglers from the playoffs. The Firebirds learned their lesson from game one, and played the most complete 60 minutes of hockey this

season at the right time. Nikke Kokko got his first shutout in the AHL, and he had help with defense and wingers blocking shots and get the puck out of trouble. It is on to the second round. As of this writing, it is looking like the next opponent will be the Abbotsford Canucks for best of 5 series.

	1 st	2 nd	3 rd		Total
Wranglers	0	0	0		0
Firebirds	0	1	1		2

Full game statistic can be found on the AHL site: <https://theahl.com/stats/game-center/1027697>

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

Team Game Stats:

	Wranglers	Firebirds
Shots	23	20
PP	0 / 3	0 / 1
PIM	2	6
SH	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.

Icing	1 st	2 nd	3 rd		Total
Wranglers	1	3	3		7
Firebirds	0	2	4		6

Offsides	1 st	2 nd	3 rd		Total
Wranglers	2	2	1		5
Firebirds	2	2	0		4

Faceoff Wins	1 st	2 nd	3 rd		Total
Wranglers	7	10	7		24
Firebirds	6	13	11		30

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

Zone	Wranglers			Firebirds		
	ES	PP	PK	ES	PP	PK
Attack	7	3	0	4	1	0
Neutral	4	0	0	11	0	0
Defense	20	0	0	12	0	2

ES – Even Strength

PP – Power Play

PK – Penalty Kill