

GAME REPORT

Home: CV Firebirds vs. Away: HSK Silver Knights

Date: Jan 16, 2025 7:00PM PST

Pre-Game

The Silver Knights continue to be at the bottom of the Pacific Division and the AHL as a whole. They are a contradiction to their NHL affiliate the Golden Knights who are near the top of the NHL in points. Call-ups to the Golden Knights is still constant. The Silver Knights are near the top in penalty minutes, and they are tied with giving up the most goals in the AHL. They are 0-2-1-0 in their last three games. Tonight's game is the 3rd in their 6-game road trip.

The Firebirds start the second half of the season with tonight's game. As the calendar year has turned, the team is showing their identity. They have won 4 of 5 this month and look to continue the trend tonight. The young players are showing they can perform at a high level. The power play has improved.

Head-to-Head: The teams played their only match up in Coachella Valley on Dec 3. The Silver Knights were on a losing streak at that point. I mentioned that the game could be trap game for the Firebirds, and the prediction came true. The Silver Knights won 4 to 3. Penalty trouble and failure to score on the power play didn't help. There was some controversy on what appeared to be a tying goal that was waved off because of goalie interference. The available replays didn't have a conclusive look. A month later the Firebirds power play is much better, they are more physical, and they are starting to play at a higher level. The Firebirds still need to treat this as a trap game and play at the competitive level. Tonight's game will be the 2nd of the 8-game series. They will see each other 6 more times over the remaining three months.

1st Period

The Firebirds came out fast off the opening fac off. They got the first goal within the first 2 minutes of the game. Daniel Sprong worked the half wall and pass to Lleyton Roed. Road made a power move to the goal and took a shot off Akira Schmid. The rebound came off the left of the goal tender where Logan Morrison deposited the loose change. The Silver Knights took over as the Firebirds started playing on their heels. At the halfway mark, the Silver Knights won a faceoff and work the puck to Mason Morelli who put it home to tie the score. The Firebirds had two back-to-back power plays, and didn't score. Credit the Silver Knights who are playing below the goal line to generate opportunities in the period. Ales Stezka kept the Firebirds in the game with several great saves.

2nd Period

It would be impossible to describe this period's offensive outburst by the Firebirds. Rather than writing a tome, I will keep this short and simple. 22 seconds into the period, Jani Nyman got a goal to take back the lead. 5 minute later Daniel Sprong found the back of the net. 1 minute and 30 seconds later, Eduard Sale put home a puck on a nice pass from Max Lajoie. The Silver Knights called a time out, but it didn't help. 4 minutes later and past the half waypoint in the period, Jacob Melanson added to the scoring parade. Akira Schmid was pulled for Carl Lindbom. 12 seconds after the 5th goal Jani Nyman put home the 6th goal and the first shot on Carl Lindbom. The 5 goals in the period match the most ever by the Firebirds in single

period. They accomplished the feat on 10/31/23 against Abbotsford. 13 different Firebirds were on the scoring sheet.

3rd Period

The Silver Knights didn't go quietly. The points leader for the Silver Knights, Tanner Laczynski, found the back of the net within the first 24 seconds of the period. The Silver Knights were getting zone time and shots on goal. Stezka had to stand strong in the net. The Silver Knights' Cal Burke scored the 3rd goal a minute after the half way point in the period. There was a little doubt in the minds of the fans, but the Firebirds bent but didn't break. The Firebirds didn't get any more goals off the new goalie Lindbom.

Post-Game

A month and a half later, the Firebirds were able to rise up the Silver Knights physical play, and get a win against a team they should beat based on record. The Silver Knights don't play as if they only have 9 wins and are at the bottom of the league. They seem to be a contradiction to their NHL affiliate team that is near the top of the NHL in points. Like the first game the Firebirds didn't score on the power play, but they moved the puck around better and had more shots on goal. There is a theme in the stats that is hidden. When the Firebirds are not playing to their game, they are behind the faceoff wins and they ice the puck more. They turn this around as the game progresses. The faceoff wins and icing stats for this game are similar to the first game. Silver Knights continue their road trip to the Ontario Reign. The Firebirds are now solo second in the tightly packed Pacific Division, and they will start a 4-game road trip starting with back-to-back games this weekend in Colorado.

	1 st	2 nd	3 rd		Total
Silver Knights	1	0	2		
Firebirds	1	5	0		

Full game statistic can be found on the AHL site: <https://theahl.com/stats/game-center/1027031>

Team Game Stats:

	Silver Knights	Firebirds
Shots	33	34
PP	0 / 3	0 / 4
PIM	10	8
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
Silver Knights	1	1	3		5
Firebirds	3	3	2		8

Offsides	1st	2nd	3rd	Total
Silver Knights	1	1	0	2
Firebirds	0	1	0	1

Faceoff Wins	1st	2nd	3rd	Total
Silver Knights	9	9	7	25
Firebirds	10	13	14	37

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

	Silver Knights			Firebirds		
Zone	ES	PP	PK	ES	PP	PK
Attack	7	1	1	6	7	0
Neutral	6	0	1	13	0	0
Defense	6	0	3	8	1	2

ES – Even Strength

PP – Power Play

PK – Penalty Kill