



John W. Irvine
Director of Communications

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Crucial games are over-played in pro sports, but that is exactly what Ron Newman's first place Los Angeles Skyhawks face on their three-game swing to the east.

Starting in Hartford on Saturday, the Skyhawks face the top three ASL teams in the east during the next six days. After tangling with Connecticut's Yankees, the Skyhawks travel to New York for a June 9 game and wrap things up on June 11 in Rhode Island.

At last look, the Rhode Island Oceans were in first place in the Eastern Division with 39 points, one more than the Skyhawks. The Yankees are two games and seven points off the Oceans pace, and the defending champion New York Apollo aren't far behind.

Two Western Division teams, the Tacoma Tides and Sacramento, have already made eastern trips, and their results have been horrid. In three games, both teams lost twice and tied once, managing to total only three measly points under the ASL scoring system.

Newman expects better results from his team, but maintains modest goals from the trip.

"I'd consider the trip a success if we could get away with 12 points," said Newman. "Even though I haven't seen any of the eastern clubs play yet, my scouts on the east coast told me we'd be in for dog fights in all three games."

The Skyhawks coach is hoping his brilliant young defender Ken Fogarty can