



PRESS RELEASE

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Hockey East Opening Round Playoff Pairings Set **NESN To Show Game Two of No. 11 Merrimack at No. 6 Northeastern Saturday**

WAKEFIELD, Mass. - The Hockey East Association announced the pairings for the upcoming 31st annual Hockey East Tournament Saturday night. The opening round of the postseason tournament begins Friday, March 6, with best-of-three opening round series on campus sites of seeds five through eight. The top four seeds, No. 1 Boston University, No. 2 Providence, No. 3 Boston College and No. 4 UMass Lowell, will receive byes into the quarterfinal round.

All series will start Friday, March 6. Saturday's contest between No. 11 Merrimack and No. 6 Northeastern will air on NESN, with puck drop scheduled for 4 p.m. A potential Game 3 will also air on NESN starting at 4:30 p.m.

The No. 5 seed Notre Dame Fighting Irish will welcome No. 12 University of Massachusetts to the Compton Family Ice Arena Friday night at 7:35 p.m. Notre Dame won the regular-season series, 2-0-0, taking two games at the Mullins Center Dec. 5-6. Last year, the Irish downed Boston University, 3-2, in the opening round before besting Boston College in a three-game series. Notre Dame fell to eventual tournament champion UMass Lowell in the semifinals. Massachusetts owns a 9-27-0 all-time record in the Hockey East playoffs. The Minutemen last advanced past the first round in 2007 when they fell to New Hampshire, 3-2, in the semifinals.

No. 6 seed Northeastern plays host to No. 11 Merrimack at Matthews Arena beginning Friday night at 7 p.m.. The Huskies split the season against the Warriors, each team taking a victory in its own arena Nov. 21-22. Northeastern boasts a 17-39-1 record in postseason play, capturing the tournament title in 1988. Merrimack, 8-33-0 in the tournament all-time, last reached the championship in 2011. The two squads met in the 1988 NCAA quarterfinal, but have never played each other in the Hockey East tournament. Game Two of this series will air on NESN Saturday afternoon at 4 p.m. while a potential Game Three will be carried on NESN Sunday at 4:30 p.m.

No. 7 seed Vermont is set to meet familiar rival No. 10 Maine at Gutterson Fieldhouse next Friday at 7:05 p.m. Earlier in the year, the Catamounts took two decisions from the Black Bears in Alford Arena Nov. 28-29. Vermont carries an 8-16-0 record in the postseason in eight appearances, reaching the championship game in 2008. Maine has skated in the tournament 28 times, posting a 53-34-0 record in those seasons. Maine has captured five Hockey East titles (1989, 1992, 1993, 2004) and is the only program to record a shutout in the opening round of the Hockey East playoffs as the Black Bears blanked Merrimack, 2-0, March 8, 2014.

In the final opening round matchup, No. 8 New Hampshire will entertain the newest member of Hockey East, No. 9 UConn Friday at 7 p.m. The Wildcats are the fourth-winningest program in Hockey East postseason history with a 46-37-2 record and two titles in 28 appearances. UConn is winless in 13 outings against New Hampshire, but has met them just three times since 2002.

All opening round games will be streamed live by Pack Network on www.HockeyEastOnline.tv with the exception of any games shown on NESN. More details regarding streaming will be made available in the coming days.

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