



PRESS RELEASE

contact: Brian Smith | bsmith@hockeyeastonline.com | 339.227.2988 | @brismi22

591 North Avenue #2 | Wakefield, MA | 01880 | 781-245-2122

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: JANUARY 6, 2017

Northern Irish Connections Friendship Four Fields For 2017, 2018 Unveiled *ECAC Hockey Foes Will Join Hockey East Rivals in Belfast for Annual Event*

BOSTON - The men's ice hockey programs from ECAC Hockey's Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute, Clarkson University, Yale University, and Union College and Hockey East's Providence College, University of Maine, Boston University, and University of Connecticut are slated to compete in the next two iterations of the annual Northern Irish Connections Friendship Four Tournament to be held in Belfast, Northern Ireland it was announced today from Boston's historic Fenway Park. The 2017 and 2018 versions of the tournament will be held over the respective American Thanksgiving weekends.

RPI, Clarkson, Providence, and Maine will travel to Northern Ireland to first play against their conference rival in a league contest on November 24 for the right to compete for the 2017 Belpot Trophy the next night in the Northern Irish Connections Friendship Four Tournament. Yale, Union, Boston University and UConn will venture overseas during the same weekend in 2018 to battle for the Belpot under the same format on November 23-24, 2018.

"The Friendship Four tournament has been a phenomenal event for ECAC Hockey and its member institutions. All aspects of the tournament during the first two years have been first class, and created life-long memories," said ECAC Hockey commissioner **Steve Hagwell**. "I know the teams participating in the 2017 and 2018 tournaments are eager to visit the great city of Belfast and to experience everything the Friendship Four has to offer."

"Having been part of the first two Friendship Four events, I am thrilled with this news and what it means to the athletes and coaches who will be the primary beneficiaries," said Hockey East commissioner **Joe Bertagna**. "Our hosts have done a tremendous job launching this event and the schools who have played to date have delivered the best of NCAA ice hockey to the people of Belfast."

The squads will square off at The SSE Arena, home of the Belfast Giants, a professional team that competes within the Elite Ice Hockey League. The arena has hosted the Friendship Four Tournament since 2015, when the inaugural tournament provided a four-game set that featured the ECAC's Brown University and Colgate University and Hockey East's UMass Lowell River Hawks and Northeastern Huskies.

Additionally, the teams will take part in cultural experiences, including visiting with youth groups and exploring the deep history of Northern Ireland.

Last year's iteration of the tournament was an international success, seen on television across North America and Europe, and attended by over 20,000 spectators. The 2015 event, part of Boston and Belfast's sister cities project, marked the first time that NCAA college hockey was played outside of North America.

Previous Friendship Four Results:

November 27, 2015

UMass Lowell 3, Northeastern 2 (OT)
Brown 5, Colgate 0

November 28, 2015

UMass Lowell 5 *, Brown 5 (OT)
Northeastern 7, Colgate 1

November 25, 2016

Vermont 4, Massachusetts 2
Quinnipiac 0 *, St. Lawrence 0 (OT)

November 26, 2016

Vermont 5, Quinnipiac 1
St. Lawrence 2 *, Massachusetts 2

* Won in a shootout

Future Friendship Four Dates:

November 24, 2017

RPI vs. Clarkson
Providence vs. Maine

November 25, 2017

Belpot Title Game
Third-Place Game

November 23, 2018

Boston University vs. UConn
Yale vs. Union

November 24, 2018

Belpot Title Game
Third-Place Game

HEA

