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Weekend Preview

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NORTHEASTERN TAKES WIN STREAK TO WALTER BROWN *Providence-UNH faces off NESN's Hockey East broadcast package*

It may still be premature to say the Northeastern Huskies are completely back in the Hockey East race, but a 3-0 win over first-place Boston College Saturday to cap off a five-game overall winning streak is about as impressive as it gets. Northeastern will look to extend that streak when they skate into BU's Walter Brown Arena on Friday night. The Huskies' win over BC was their first in league play this season, giving them a 1-7-1 record. That sounds worse than it is, however, as they are only three points behind both BU and Providence in the league standings. Both BU and Northeastern could very much use a victory in this match.

BU dominated last season's series by scores of 7-6, 4-0 and 7-2 and has won four straight games vs. the Huskies, so NU will be looking for some vengeance. The way the Huskies are playing, they have a good shot to get it. And don't forget that Northeastern boasts a strong 4-2-1 record in its last seven visits to BU's home rink.

The Terriers are hoping to rebound from a slim 2-1 loss to Massachusetts on Wednesday, their first loss ever to UMass at Walter Brown. The Minutemen were pleased to wel-

come back Stephen Werner, one of several heroes of Team USA's run to its first Gold Medal at the World Junior Championships, who set up both UMass goals in his first game back.

As mentioned, BU is battling closest to Providence in the Hockey East standings as both clubs endure challenging seasons. The Friars have had no trouble collecting wins outside of conference play, where they hold a 6-1-1 record, but they've been humbled a bit by Hockey East foes and only have a 2-5-2 league record to build on. But one of their two victories came Nov. 14 against UNH, this weekend's foe in a home-and-home set. Leading 4-2, the host Friars scored two more quick goals to chase starter Mike Ayers early in the third period. UNH was able to put two more on the board to mount a comeback by the midpoint of the final frame, but it was too late and Providence emerged with the 7-4 triumph. Torry Gajda scored twice in the game and also had one assist. Friday's rematch at Providence is the debut match of the Hockey East broadcast package on New England Sports Network (see right).

Merrimack visits Boston College in the only other league game of the weekend. Their first match this year ended in a 3-3 deadlock. BC defenseman Andrew Alberts potted two goals in the contest.

In non-conference play, Lowell's two-game set at Michigan State is the marquee event. UML has won three straight and currently stands in fourth place in Hockey East and is tied with Providence for 19th in the recently-released Pairwise Rankings.

RANKINGS

TEAM	PWR	AHCA	USCHO
Boston College	2	2	2
Maine	3	4	4
Massachusetts	17	15	-
Providence	19	-	-
UMass Lowell	19	-	-
New Hampshire	22	11	10
Boston Univ.	25	-	-

NESN PACKAGE COMMENCES

The New England Sports Network's reunion with Hockey East begins tomorrow night at Providence's Schneider Arena, as NESN airs a live broadcast of UNH vs. Providence. The official broadcast partner of Hockey East for the league's first 13 years of existence returns with a 15-game package that features Friday night games for the remainder of the regular season and live coverage of championship weekend, including the women's championship game.

VERMONT TO JOIN HOCKEY EAST

The University of Vermont has been admitted as the 10th member of the Hockey East men's league and the seventh member of the Hockey East women's league. Officials from both Hockey East and the University of Vermont made the announcement at a joint press conference earlier today in Burlington. The UVM squads will start competing in Hockey East play in the 2005-06 season. For more information, see related release.

RESULTS / SCHEDULE

Tuesday, January 6

Maine 5, at Merrimack 2 *

Wednesday, January 7

Massachusetts 2, at Boston University 1 *

Friday, January 9

Northeastern at Boston University *
 New Hampshire at Providence (NESN) *
 Merrimack at Boston College *
 UMass Lowell at Michigan State

Saturday, January 10

Providence at New Hampshire (NHPTV) *
 Holy Cross at Northeastern
 Sacred Heart at Maine (WABI)
 UMass Lowell at Michigan State
 Massachusetts at Trois-Rivieres (exh.)

* Hockey East game

Games start at 7pm unless indicated
 All times Eastern

2003-04 STANDINGS

Team	GP	W	L	T	Pts	Overall	HE Offense	HE Defense
Maine	10	7	2	1	15	14-4-1	3.30 GPG	2.10 GAPG
Boston College	9	6	1	2	14	13-3-3	3.67 GPG	2.11 GAPG
Massachusetts	12	6	4	2	14	10-6-5	2.08 GPG	2.25 GAPG
UMass Lowell	10	6	3	1	13	10-8-3	2.80 GPG	2.30 GAPG
New Hampshire	10	5	3	2	12	11-7-2	3.60 GPG	3.10 GAPG
Merrimack	12	2	7	3	7	7-11-3	2.17 GPG	3.33 GAPG
Boston University	9	2	5	2	6	5-6-6	2.44 GPG	2.89 GAPG
Providence	9	2	5	2	6	8-6-3	3.22 GPG	3.44 GAPG
Northeastern	9	1	7	1	3	5-9-2	2.11 GPG	3.67 GAPG