



www.HockeyEastOnline.com

Weekend Preview

Noah Smith
 Director of Media Relations
 Hockey East Association
 Phone: (781) 245-2122
 Fax: (781) 245-2492
 nsmith@HockeyEastOnline.com

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: MARCH 11, 2004

QUARTERFINAL WEEKEND BEGINS IN EARNEST *Anticipation builds for teams seeking passage to the FleetCenter*

Game on!

It's early March, and it's tournament time. Once again, Hockey East finished its regular season in dramatic fashion, witnessing David Van der Gulik's OT goal on Saturday in a must-win situation for Boston University. That capped an evening of sensational results that yielded four one-goal games, all relevant to the Hockey East and/or NCAA tournament picture.

A popular phrase in Hockey East, referring directly to the three-game regular season series between the teams, goes 'it's difficult to beat a team three times in the same season'. BU lived out that reality after being swept by Boston College in the series last year, responding with two wins over the Eagles at the FleetCenter, once in the Beanpot finale and again in a thrilling 2OT triumph in the Hockey East semifinal. This year, BC again swept BU in the regular season series and made it four wins in a row with Ryan Murphy's overtime goal vs. the Terriers in the Beanpot. If it's difficult to beat a team three times in a season, how about six times in a season?

That's what the top-seeded Eagles will need to do to advance to the FleetCenter. They won

three Hockey East championships in a span of four years from 1998-2001, but have not been to the title game the last two years. Entering the tournament on a three-game losing streak (road losses to UNH and Maine), BC faces a significant hurdle in the eighth-seeded Terriers, who have plenty of motivation and nothing to lose vs. their crosstown rivals. For ideal matchups, it doesn't get much better than these two.

But there will also be plenty of subtext out in Amherst, where the UMass Minutemen are hosting a Hockey East playoff for the first time ever. Their draw – the UMass Lowell River Hawks, who would be hosting this series if not for forfeiting a few wins earlier this season due to the use of an ineligible player. Two of those wins came against the Minutemen, who have scored a total of 10 goals in the last seven games, an 0-6-1 stretch.

Merrimack is hoping to repeat UMass' feat from last season – winning a quarterfinal series at Maine. The No. 2 seed Black Bears are 15-1-1 at home this season, which includes a sweep over Boston College last weekend. Merrimack's two ties vs. BC this year prove the Warriors can play with anyone, although they were swept in the season series vs. the Black Bears.

UNH will host Providence in the fourth and final quarterfinal series. As usual, the Wildcats have been dominant on Olympic home ice, running their record to 11-4-2 this season. But their four home losses came against relatively tame opponents who have a combined record of 43-72-22, a .394 winning percentage. At 15-12-7, Providence has a better record than any of this season's previous four victors at the normally intimidating Whittemore Center and thus has a very reasonable chance to advance.

RANKINGS

TEAM	PWR	AHCA	USCHO
Maine	1	2	2
Boston College	1	3	3
New Hampshire	8	10	10
Providence	19	–	–
UMass Lowell	20	–	–
Boston Univ.	21	–	–
Massachusetts	21	–	–
Northeastern	25	–	–
Merrimack	–	–	–

HEAD-TO-HEAD HISTORY

No. 8 Boston Univ. at No. 1 Boston College

Hockey East Season Series: BC, 3-0
 Hockey East Playoff History: BU, 4-1
 Last Quarterfinal Meeting: 1993

No. 7 Merrimack at No. 2 Maine

Hockey East Season Series: Maine, 3-0
 Hockey East Playoff History: Maine, 1-0
 Last Quarterfinal Meeting: 1992

No. 6 UMass Lowell at No. 3 Massachusetts

Hockey East Season Series: UMass, 3-0
 (UML forfeited two wins in the series.)
 Hockey East Playoff History: First meeting

No. 5 Providence at No. 4 New Hampshire

Hockey East Season Series: Tie, 1-1-1
 Hockey East Playoff History: UNH, 4-3
 Last Quarterfinal Meeting: 1995

QUARTERFINAL SCHEDULE

Thursday, March 11

Boston Univ. at Boston College (Gm. 1)
 UMass Lowell at Massachusetts (Gm. 1)
 Providence at UNH (Gm. 1)

Friday, March 12

Boston Univ. at Boston College (Gm. 2 - 8pm)
 UMass Lowell at Massachusetts (Gm. 2)
 Providence at UNH (Gm. 2)
 Merrimack at Maine (Gm. 1)

Saturday, March 13

Boston Univ. at Boston College (Gm. 3) *
 UMass Lowell at Massachusetts (Gm. 3) *
 Providence at UNH (Gm. 3) *
 Merrimack at Maine (Gm. 2)
 (one game TBA will be televised live on NESN)

Sunday, March 14

Merrimack at Maine (Gm. 3) *

* if necessary

Games start at 7pm unless indicated

2003-04 STANDINGS

Team	GP	W	L	T	Pts	Overall	HE offense	HE defense
1. Boston College	24	17	4	3	37	26-6-4	3.67 GPG	1.88 GAPG
2. Maine	24	17	5	2	36	26-7-3	3.21 GPG	1.75 GAPG
3. Massachusetts	24	12	9	3	27	16-11-6	1.96 GPG	2.62 GAPG
4. New Hampshire	24	10	8	6	26	18-12-6	3.42 GPG	3.17 GAPG
5. Providence	24	7	11	6	20	15-12-7	2.75 GPG	3.62 GAPG
6. UMass Lowell	24	7	12	5	19	10-21-7	2.33 GPG	2.71 GAPG
7. Merrimack	24	6	12	6	18	11-17-6	2.21 GPG	3.29 GAPG
8. Boston University	24	6	13	5	17	10-15-9	2.38 GPG	2.96 GAPG
9. Northeastern	24	5	13	6	16	11-16-7	2.33 GPG	3.00 GAPG