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# Weekend Preview

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## MINUTEMEN LOOKING TO COWBOY UP AT LOWELL *Seven of nine Hockey East arenas host weekend action*

With all the buzz surrounding the Red Sox - Yankees AL Championship Series, it's easy to forget that Hockey East begins the race for its 20th anniversary championship this Saturday, when the University of Massachusetts faces off against UMass Lowell in the first league game of the season.

The Minutemen were the darlings of the 2002-03 slate, posting dramatic regular season victories over BC, BU and Maine as an overture to a quarterfinal series sweep against the Black Bears in Orono. UMass advanced to the Hockey East semifinals for the first time in history and played nearly even with defending champion UNH before falling, 5-4. The thrilling run came on the heels of two consecutive years of missing the playoffs.

They won't catch anyone off guard this year – the Minutemen were picked to finish fifth in the preseason coaches' poll, but clearly have home ice (fourth place or better) as one of their primary goals as the program continues to develop. They lost only four players from last year's roster and added a handful of transfers. UMass Lowell appears to be just one step behind Massachusetts in the rebuilding process, with only one senior and three juniors on this year's roster, and a couple of Division-I transfers of its own.

The Minutemen swept a home-and-home series against UML to clinch the series very early last season. Stephen Werner enjoyed a breakout game with two goals and two assists in a 6-3 win at home to jumpstart an outstanding rookie season. It was just the second time in nine seasons of play that Massachusetts was able to win the set, but Lowell was able to come back to salvage a 3-2 win in the third game.

The Minutemen also have a home game this weekend, tonight against UConn. The interstate rivals staged a memorable contest last February in which defense partners Marvin Degon and Thomas Pöck combined for three goals and six assists to lead an 8-6 win for UMass.

Only two other Hockey East teams will be playing on the road this weekend, but both are involved in high-profile events. Pre-season favorite Boston College opens Friday vs. No. 15 Minnesota-Duluth in the annual Ice Breaker Tournament, hosted this

year by 11th ranked Michigan State. The University of Maine (No.13 in the polls) travels all the way to hockey hotbed Nebraska for the Maverick Stampede and will open against top-ranked Minnesota in a rematch of the 2002 national title game.

The five other Hockey East squads will all be hosting home action as college hockey season returns to New England. In a clash of old-school ECAC rivals, RPI will visit Boston University Saturday before an unusual Sunday night game at Providence. The Friars open Schneider Arena's 31st season against Sacred Heart, 24 hours after the Saints play in another opener at Merrimack's ever-improving Volpe Complex. Vermont is hoping to avenge a 10-0 loss to the UNH Wildcats last season with a visit to the Whittemore Center on Saturday, while Colgate faces off at Northeastern's Matthews Arena.

### WEEKEND SCHEDULE

#### Thursday, October 9

Connecticut at Massachusetts

#### Friday, October 10

Sacred Heart at Merrimack

*Ice Breaker Tournament at Michigan St.*

Boston College vs. Minnesota-Duluth (5pm)

Findlay at Michigan State (8pm)

*Maverick Stampede at Nebraska-Omaha*

Maine vs. Minnesota (6pm)

Wisconsin at Nebraska-Omaha (9pm)

#### Saturday, October 11

Massachusetts at UMass Lowell \*

Rensselaer at Boston University

Vermont at New Hampshire

Colgate at Northeastern

Sacred Heart at Providence

*Ice Breaker Tournament (5/8pm)*

*Maverick Stampede (6/9pm)*

#### Sunday, October 12

Rensselaer at Providence

\* Hockey East game

Games start at 7pm EST unless indicated.

All game times are Eastern Standard Time.

### IN THE POLLS

Team	Rank
Boston College	2/3
New Hampshire	4
Boston University	6/7
Maine	13

Others Receiving Votes:  
 Massachusetts, Providence

### 2003-04 STANDINGS

Team	GP	W	L	T	Pts	Overall	Offense	Defense
Boston College	0	0	0	0	0	1-0-0	5.00 GPG	3.00 GAPG
Boston University	0	0	0	0	0	0-0-0	-	-
Maine	0	0	0	0	0	0-0-0	-	-
Massachusetts	0	0	0	0	0	0-0-0	-	-
UMass Lowell	0	0	0	0	0	0-0-0	-	-
Merrimack	0	0	0	0	0	0-0-0	-	-
New Hampshire	0	0	0	0	0	0-0-0	-	-
Northeastern	0	0	0	0	0	0-0-0	-	-
Providence	0	0	0	0	0	0-0-0	-	-