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Weekend Preview

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BC VISITS NORTHEASTERN IN BATTLE OF TWO HOT TEAMS *Undaunted River Hawks will challenge state rival Minutemen*

Following a frustrating 0-9-2 start to the 2003-04 season, the Northeastern Huskies have suddenly morphed into one of the league's hottest teams. Following back-to-back shutout victories to open the month of the December, NU played in the Rensselaer Holiday Tournament last weekend and posted two more wins. Junior forward Jason Guerriero exploded for three goals and four assists in the tourney and was selected as the Most Valuable Player. Fellow Huskies Keni Gibson, Mike Morris and Steve Sanders were also named to the All-Tournament team. Another victory at home on Saturday would stretch NU's streak to five games, which would be the Huskies' longest D-I winning streak since they had two such streaks in the 1988-89 season.

As luck would have it, Saturday's opponent is Boston College, winner of seven straight and undefeated in the last 12. The Eagles are fresh off a championship at the Great Lakes Invitational tournament, which they won even without the services of exceptional sophomore Patrick Eaves, who is with Team USA at the World Junior Championships (see brief at right.)

With the home ice advantage favoring Northeastern against its crosstown rival, this has all the markings of one great match, and Comcast CN8 will be televising the game live. In its first year in the Boston, the carrier's region includes metro-Philadelphia.

CSTV faces off the second half of its inaugural season with BU at Minnesota on Friday, the first of a two-game set. Both teams have been up and down in the national polls this season and each boasts an incredible history. Among old-school East-West rivalries, this is one of the best.

NESN will also enter the fray this weekend, warming up for their return to the Hockey East Game of the Week package with a broadcast of Quinnipiac at Providence. Next weekend, NESN returns to Providence for the Hockey East package opener, when the Friars host UNH.

Massachusetts and UMass Lowell finish up their season series with a home-and-home set, both matinee contests. The Minutemen prevailed 3-2 in the first meeting, a very early league opener on Oct. 11 in Lowell. Sophomore Ben Walter potted his first two goals of the season, but was upstaged by a short-handed goal in the closing minutes by UMass' Peter Trovato. The Minutemen have enjoyed a strong 5-2-2 start in league play, losing only to Boston College and Providence, but UMass Lowell is nipping at their heels at 4-3-1. The River Hawks' last league game was a 5-4 win at UNH which followed a win and a tie vs. BU. Lowell is catching the Minutemen in an quirky stretch of four ties in their last five games.

IN THE POLLS

Team	AHCA	USCHO
	Poll	Poll
Boston College	2	2
Maine	5	4
New Hampshire	7	7
Massachusetts	11	11

WORLD JUNIOR CHAMPIONSHIPS

Team USA today completed a perfect 4-0 record in round robin play, defeating Russia, 4-1. BC's Patrick Eaves set up the first two U.S. goals and Stephen Werner of UMass scored the third. Werner scored two goals in Tuesday's 4-3 win over Sweden, including a short-hander in the third period that stood up as the game-winner. With the 4-0 record, Team USA gets a quarterfinal bye and will next play in Saturday's semifinal.

DECEMBER HONOREES

It was a tight competition for CCM Player of the Month in Hockey East. BC captain Ben Eaves ultimately got the edge over fellow Eagle Tony Voce, Northeastern's Jason Guerriero, UMass' Thomas Pöck, and UMass Lowell's Mark Pandolfo, all of whom have played exceptionally well of late. Maine's Frank Doyle was named ITECH Goaltender of the Month and NU's Ray Ortiz was the Superskills Hockey Rookie of the Month. For more details, see related release.

RESULTS / SCHEDULE

Monday, December 29

Rensselaer Holiday Tournament
 Northeastern 7, Mercyhurst 5

Friday, January 2

Merrimack at Princeton
 Quinnipiac at Providence (NESN)
 Boston Univ. at Minnesota (8pm - CSTV)

Saturday, January 3

Massachusetts at UMass Lowell (2pm) *
 Boston College at Northeastern (CN8) *
 Merrimack at Princeton
 Yale at New Hampshire (NHPTV)
 Boston University at Minnesota (8pm)

Sunday, January 4

UMass Lowell at Massachusetts (3pm) *
 Maine vs. Vermont (2pm - at Portland, ME)

* 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
Boston College	8	6	0	2	14	13-2-3	4.12 GPG	2.00 GAPG
Maine	9	6	2	1	13	11-4-1	3.11 GPG	2.11 GAPG
Massachusetts	9	5	2	2	12	9-4-5	2.56 GPG	2.44 GAPG
New Hampshire	10	5	3	2	12	11-6-2	3.60 GPG	3.10 GAPG
UMass Lowell	8	4	3	1	9	8-8-3	3.00 GPG	2.88 GAPG
Merrimack	11	2	6	3	7	5-10-3	2.18 GPG	3.18 GAPG
Boston University	8	2	4	2	6	5-5-4	2.62 GPG	3.00 GAPG
Providence	9	2	5	2	6	7-6-3	3.22 GPG	3.44 GAPG
Northeastern	8	0	7	1	1	4-9-2	2.00 GPG	4.12 GAPG