



PRESS RELEASE

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U.S. OLYMPIC CAMPS WELCOME FAMILIAR FACES ***17 alums of Hockey East programs vying for spots on U.S. rosters***

USA Hockey recently announced the men's and women's rosters for its upcoming selection camps which will be used to determine which athletes will represent the U.S. in the 2006 Olympic Games, to be held in February in Torino, Italy. Continuing a long tradition, Hockey East programs will be well represented at both camps.

On the men's side, the torch is being passed from one group of elite athletes to another. Team USA veterans Bill Guerin (BC) and Keith Tkachuk (BU), with five combined previous Olympic appearances, will anchor a formidable forward corps that includes fellow 2002 Olympian Chris Drury (BU) and Brian Gionta (BC), who is aiming for his first Olympic appearance. On defense, Hal Gill (PC) and Aaron Miller (UVM) will be representing their respective Hockey East squads in front of goaltenders Ty Conklin (UNH) and Rick DiPietro (BU). The youngest of those eight, DiPietro represents the long-term future of Team USA.

It's a similar story on the women's side as the average age of the representing athletes continues to decrease with the blossoming of the talent pool at the developmental level. Legendary Northeastern goaltender Chanda Gunn, the 2004 Hockey Humanitarian winner and two-time nominee for the Patty Kazmaier Award, will battle three other goaltenders for the Olympic duties. She'll be pleased to have defenseman Kelli Halcisak (PC '04) on her team. Halcisak terrorized opposing goaltenders throughout her Hockey East career, and was twice named Hockey East tournament MVP. Other former Friars on the selection camp invite list are Jessica Tabb ('01), Rush Zimmerman ('05) and the senior member of Team USA, Cammi Granato ('93). Northeastern has its own veteran on the squad in Shelley Looney ('94), now an assistant coach at the University of Vermont, as well as Brooke Whitney ('02), an assistant at UConn. Not to be outdone, UNH will be represented by Tricia Dunn, another two-time Olympic veteran.

The women's team also boasts plenty of other connections to Hockey East. Winny Brodt, best known for her accomplishments at the University of Minnesota, began her playing career with UNH. Katie King, a forward in camp, is an assistant coach with the up-and-coming Boston College women's team. The Team USA coaching staff is headed by Ben Smith, a former head coach of the Northeastern men's team. His staff includes Alana Blahoski, who enjoyed a stellar playing career at Providence before helping Team USA to the gold medal in 1998, and Mike Gilligan, who was the long-time head coach of the Vermont men's team.

The Hockey East coaching lines run deep at USA Hockey. The recently announced U.S. Under-18 squad will be coached by two-time Hockey East All-Star defenseman Jack Capuano (Maine). Capuano will be assisted by Dave Lasseonde and Kenny Rausch, current assistant coaches at UNH and UMass Lowell, respectively.

The Hockey East Association is a 10-team, Division-I men's college hockey conference, with offices based in Wakefield, Mass. Founded in 1983, the league has won four NCAA championships in the past 13 years. The conference also sponsors a women's league, founded in 2001, which will feature eight Division-I programs in 2005-06.

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