



Weekend Preview

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“FRIDAY NIGHT ICE” DEBUTS WITH BU AT NORTHEASTERN Lowell looks to extend unbeaten streak with two home games

USCHO's PairWise Rankings (PWR) were released earlier this week, and there were a few pleasant surprises for Hockey East. Foremost among those, Boston University came in tied with Boston College all the way up at No. 4, thanks in part to Monday's 2-1 win over top-ranked Minnesota, the first game in BU's new Harry Agganis Arena. Brad Zancanaro scored the first ever goal in the new rink, 24 hours after scoring the last BU goal in the old barn. In the past six games, he has seven goals, having failed to score in just one of those games.

Zancanaro brings his hot streak to Northeastern Friday night, and NESN will be on hand to present the first game of this year's Friday Night Ice package. Ten regular season games will be televised, featuring all nine Hockey East

teams and eight of the league's nine arenas. Regular season coverage will be followed by coverage of the men's tournament and the women's championship game, which will be held this year at BU's Walter Brown Arena on March 12-13.

Friday's tango is the first match of the season between Beanpot rivals BU and Northeastern, another eyebrow-raiser in the PWR at No. 16, tied with Maine. Last year, BU dealt NU a 4-3 blow in overtime in their first face-off, but the Huskies came back late in the season with a win and a tie as both teams fought for the final playoff berth. Jason Guerriero and Mike Morris each had two goals in the second period of the finale, a 6-3 win for Northeastern, and Guerriero added two assists. But BU clinched the final playoff berth with a clutch OT win at UNH on a thrilling final night of the 2003-04 regular season.

With a perfect 9-0 non-conference record and a seven-game unbeaten streak overall, UMass Lowell came in at 13th in the PWR, good enough to threaten for an at-large NCAA tournament bid if it holds. But the season isn't even close to over, and the River Hawks will need to start winning in conference play (0-5-2 so far) to assure themselves their first trip to the NCAAs since 1996, when NU head coach Bruce Crowder was still at the helm in Lowell. Crowder gets a chance to dampen the optimism of his former squad when the Huskies visit Lowell on Saturday. But first, the River Hawks will host the Minutemen of UMass on Friday.

Boston College quietly got the job done Tuesday at Merrimack, picking up a 4-1 win even with stars Patrick Eaves and Stephen Gionta out of the lineup with the flu. BC successfully shut down CCM Player of the Month Bryan Schmidt and fellow blueliner Jeff Caron, who have combined for 44 points this season. The Eagles revisit Merrimack Saturday night, hopefully with their two veterans back in action. They have a modest four-game winning streak, tied for the best mark by a Hockey East team this season.

UNH and Providence renew their conference vows this weekend with a home-and-home set beginning at PC's Schneider Arena. The Wildcats won the first meeting of the season, overcoming a 2-0 first-period deficit to post a 3-2 victory, thanks to a pair of scores from Preston Callander. Friar rookie Tyler Sims looked strong even in defeat, totalling 37 saves in just his second career start. Wildcat Brett Hemingway brings a nine-game point streak into the weekend series.

RESULTS / SCHEDULE

Monday, January 3

at Boston University 2, Minnesota 1

Tuesday, January 4

Boston College 4, at Merrimack 1 *

Friday, January 7

Boston University at Northeastern (NESN) *

Massachusetts at UMass Lowell *

New Hampshire at Providence *

Maine vs. U.S. U-18 Team

(exh. at Portland, ME)

Saturday, January 8

Northeastern at UMass Lowell (CN8) *

Boston College at Merrimack *

Providence at New Hampshire (NHPTV) *

U.S. U-18 Team at Boston University (exh.)

Sunday, January 9

Quinnipiac at Maine (NESN)

* Hockey East game

Games start at 7pm unless indicated.

All game times are Eastern Time.

RANKINGS

TEAM	PWR	USAT	USCHO
Boston College	4	3	3
Boston University	4	13	11
New Hampshire	6	6	7
UMass Lowell	13	-	-
Maine	16	15	15
Northeastern	16	-	-
Massachusetts	22	-	-

HOCKEY EAST STANDINGS

Team	GP	W	L	T	Pts	Overall	HE Offense	HE Defense
Boston University	9	8	1	0	16	12-7-0	4.33 GPG	2.22 GAPG
New Hampshire	8	6	1	1	13	12-4-2	3.62 GPG	2.38 GAPG
Boston College	9	5	1	3	13	10-3-3	2.67 GPG	1.67 GAPG
Maine	10	6	3	1	13	10-8-3	3.60 GPG	2.10 GAPG
Massachusetts	10	4	5	1	9	10-10-1	2.60 GPG	3.70 GAPG
Northeastern	8	3	4	1	7	7-9-2	2.88 GPG	2.88 GAPG
Providence	10	2	6	2	6	6-10-2	2.50 GPG	3.10 GAPG
Merrimack	11	1	9	1	3	8-13-2	1.91 GPG	4.27 GAPG
UMass Lowell	7	0	5	2	2	9-5-2	2.57 GPG	4.00 GAPG