



# Weekend Preview

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## MAINE AND LOWELL GO HEAD-TO-HEAD FOR HOME ICE *League title may be on the line in BC-UNH series*

UNH clinched home ice advantage in the Hockey East quarterfinals with last weekend's 5-2 win at Northeastern. BU did the same with Wednesday's 2-2 tie at NU, and BC may be soon to follow. But the Eagles have plenty in their way before guaranteeing home ice: two games vs. UNH and two vs. Maine.

The battered Eagles are playing without top defenseman Andrew Alberts and without outstanding rookie goaltender Cory Schneider, both of whom recently suffered knee injuries and will be out until at least the start of the post-season. In addition, a few other starring skaters are playing at less than 100 percent due to lingering injury issues.

The one "sure thing" team in midseason (14-game unbeaten streak) is now just hoping

what's left of its lineup can hold off Maine and UMass Lowell for home ice advantage. UMass Lowell swept the Eagles in a home-and-home series last weekend and Maine will take its shot next weekend with two games at BC.

But first, the Black Bears will host the River Hawks in what could easily be a preview of a first round matchup, although the site may be different. The three-point lead that fourth-place Maine enjoys right now over fifth-place Lowell is hardly safe, but a split this weekend would favor Maine with only two games left to play. Nevertheless, Lowell's final weekend (at Merrimack and hosting Providence) is much less daunting than Maine's, so only a win and a tie vs. Lowell would ensure the Black Bears a hosted quarterfinal this early.

With home ice locked up, both BU and UNH are looking to position themselves headed into a final weekend home-and-home series that will likely determine the regular season title. UNH can conceivably clinch this weekend with a sweep vs. BC and a loss by BU vs. Northeastern on Saturday. But let's not get ahead of ourselves: BC and Maine are both still in the running for the regular season title as well and BC could tighten the race significantly with three points vs. UNH.

A home-and-home series that was originally shaping up as a fight for the final playoff spot between Merrimack and Providence is now just a farewell tour for the Merrimack seniors, who hope to conclude their careers on a winning

note. Providence, meanwhile, is playing to prep for a road series in the quarterfinals and may be hoping for a trip to BC. The Friars tied the Eagles all three times they played this season while going a combined 1-8 vs. the other three teams they might have to face.

UMass, in a rare late season break from league play, visits Niagara on Saturday before concluding its regular season with a home-and-home series vs. Northeastern next week.

### RANKINGS

TEAM	PWR	USAT	USCHO
Boston College	3	5	5
New Hampshire	7	7	7
Boston University	7	10	9
UMass Lowell	7	9	10
Maine	18	14	14
Northeastern	20	-	-

### RESULTS / SCHEDULE

#### Wednesday, February 23

at Northeastern 2, Boston University 2 (OT) \*

#### Friday, February 25

UNH at Boston College (NESN) \*

UMass Lowell at Maine \*

Providence at Merrimack \*

#### Saturday, February 26

Boston College at UNH (WMUR) \*

UMass Lowell at Maine (WABI) \*

Merrimack at Providence (CoxSports) \*

Northeastern at Boston University \*

Massachusetts at Niagara (2pm)

\* Hockey East game

Games start at 7pm unless indicated.

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## HOCKEY EAST STANDINGS

Team	GP	W	L	T	Pts	Overall	Remaining Opponents
New Hampshire ^	20	15	3	2	32	22-7-3	at BC, BC, at BU, BU
Boston University ^	21	14	4	3	31	20-10-3	NU, UNH, at UNH
Boston College *	20	12	3	5	29	19-6-5	UNH, at UNH, Maine (2)
Maine *	20	11	5	4	26	16-10-6	UML (2), at BC (2)
UMass Lowell *	20	10	7	3	23	19-7-4	at Maine (2), at MC, PC
Northeastern *	21	8	9	4	20	13-15-5	at BU, at UMass, UMass
Massachusetts *	22	5	15	2	12	11-20-2	at Niagara, NU, at NU
Providence *	21	3	14	4	10	8-19-4	at MC, MC, at UML
Merrimack	21	1	19	1	3	8-23-2	PC, at PC, UML

\* – clinched playoff berth ^ – clinched home ice advantage in the Hockey East quarterfinals