



Weekend Preview

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LEAGUE ACTION BEGINS WITH MERRIMACK AT PROVIDENCE *National champion Pioneers return to Boston to face BC, Northeastern*

It's only the first game of 108 on the league schedule, but for Merrimack and Providence, it could mean the difference between making the playoffs and missing them.

On Friday, Providence (picked to finish 8th in the preseason coaches' poll) and Merrimack (picked to finish 9th) will face-off the first contest of the 2004-05 Hockey East league schedule. In a conference where points are gold at any time of the year, this game has unusual significance for such an early season battle. The ninth-place team misses the playoffs, while the eighth-place team is the final qualifier. Northeastern found that out the hard way last year when BU got an overtime goal at UNH on the final night of the regular season to bump out the Huskies for the second straight year. Neither Merrimack nor Providence wants to enter the final weeks in doubt – a win here against a likely stretch drive competitor would be a great starting point.

From a national perspective, however, most eyes will instead be focusing on defending national champion Denver's visit to Boston College on Friday. BC has yet to play a real game but is ranked 1-2 in the polls. Denver is ranked 11th after losing its first game of the season at Minnesota. Plenty of talent to fill the ice in this one.

After taking a stab at BC, Denver will hop on the bus over to Northeastern to take on the Huskies, who opened their season with a 4-2 win over previously top-ranked Michigan last weekend at the Lefty McFadden Invitational. The Wolverines took their revenge by defeating BU 7-2 in the same tournament and now draw their third consecutive Hockey East, hosting UNH on Friday.

That match should also draw national attention, considering Michigan has such lofty expectations headed into this season while UNH was the winner of the prestigious Ice Breaker tournament last weekend. Junior Jeff Pietrasiak and freshman Kevin Regan each got one start in goal for UNH last weekend and both performed exceptionally well, giving rise to the notion that former Hockey East Player of the Year Mike Ayers will not

be missed. On Friday, one of his successors will go head-to-head against Michigan's Al Montoya, a consensus choice as one of the best goaltenders in the nation. The game will be televised live on CSTV. UNH also plays at Michigan State on Sunday.

Following a smarting two-game sweep at the hands of North Dakota last weekend, Maine will look to rebound with a set vs. Niagara. Back in Boston, BU will continue a long-standing tradition by facing off against Vermont, who will be welcomed as the 10th member of Hockey East in 2005-06.

The longest road trip of this year is granted to the University of Massachusetts, who will visit Alaska-Anchorage for the Nye Frontier Classic. The Minutemen open the tournament against WCHA powerhouse Minnesota on Friday and will face either Canisius College or Alaska-Anchorage on Saturday.

WEEKEND SCHEDULE

Friday, October 15

Merrimack at Providence (COX3) *
 Denver at Boston College
 Niagara at Maine
 New Hampshire at Michigan (8pm - CSTV)
Nye Frontier Classic at Alaska-Anchorage
 Massachusetts vs. Minnesota (9pm)
 Canisius vs. Alaska-Anchorage (12midnight)

Saturday, October 16

Denver at Northeastern
 Vermont at Boston University (NESN)
 Niagara at Maine
Nye Frontier Classic (8/11pm)

Sunday, October 17

New Hampshire at Michigan State (2pm)

* Hockey East game

Games start at 7pm unless indicated.

All game times are Eastern Time.

IN THE POLLS

Team	USAT	USCHO
Boston College	1	2
New Hampshire	7	8
Maine	8	6
UMass Lowell	14	15

Others receiving votes:

Massachusetts and Northeastern

HOCKEY EAST STANDINGS

Team	GP	W	L	T	Pts	Overall	Offense	Defense
Boston College	0	0	0	0	0	0-0-0	-	-
Boston University	0	0	0	0	0	0-2-0	1.50 GPG	6.00 GAPG
Maine	0	0	0	0	0	1-2-0	3.67 GPG	2.67 GAPG
Massachusetts	0	0	0	0	0	1-0-0	6.00 GPG	4.00 GAPG
UMass Lowell	0	0	0	0	0	1-0-0	3.00 GPG	2.00 GAPG
Merrimack	0	0	0	0	0	1-1-0	4.00 GPG	3.50 GAPG
New Hampshire	0	0	0	0	0	2-0-0	4.50 GPG	1.50 GAPG
Northeastern	0	0	0	0	0	1-1-0	3.00 GPG	4.00 GAPG
Providence	0	0	0	0	0	1-0-0	4.00 GPG	2.00 GAPG