



Weekend Preview

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UMASS TESTS MERIT AT BOSTON COLLEGE *Northeastern takes its first crack at league competition*

Six weeks into the season, each team has at least a couple of Hockey East games under its belt. Each team, that is, except for Northeastern.

The Huskies elected to instead open with a grueling non-conference schedule that front-loaded six consecutive ranked opponents, a fitting “warm-up” to the unforgiving trenches of Hockey East play. A respectable 3-3-1 record (including a win vs. Michigan and a tie vs. North Dakota) have set up the Huskies nicely for a smooth merge into conference action.

NU opens its Hockey East slate by hosting Maine on Friday. The somewhat enigmatic defending champs are a modest 2-2 in league play and 6-5 overall. Northeastern’s Matthews Arena, which was once a very unfriendly place for the Black Bears, has re-

cently been kinder to its northern visitors, as Maine has a 2-0-2 record there in its last four visits. After facing NU on Friday, the Bears continue on to Lowell, where the River Hawks are itching for their first league win.

Northeastern travels to Providence on Sunday, and chances are that fans and players alike are hoping for anything other than a tie. The two teams tied all three games of their league series last season, proving themselves equals on the ice. Providence first has to worry about UNH, however, as the Friars revisit the site of a heart-breaking 1-0 loss in last year’s quarterfinal round.

A number of pundits predicted that the UMass Minutemen would struggle this season based on the losses of superstars Greg Mauldin and Thomas Pöck, two keys to their run to the 2004 Hockey East championship game. But a 3-1 start in league play actually put UMass in control at the top of the early standings before a 5-2 loss at Merrimack last Saturday reined in the team’s momentum. UMass has had as many shining moments (an 8-2 win over Merrimack) as dark ones (a 6-2 loss at Providence) this season, so the team’s fortunes are hardly set. A slim 1-0 loss in the final minute vs. Minnesota suggests the Minutemen can still play with anyone.

The BC Eagles are not just anyone, however – they are the No. 1 team in the nation. Back-to-back wins over North Dakota and

Maine have cemented that status. The Eagles hold a commanding 10-1-1 record against the Minutemen over their last 12 meetings, including three shutout victories. UMass has been limited to two goals or fewer in six of the last seven games in the series, the one exception being a 3-2 comeback win at BC on January 3, 2003, a representative game of a resurgent season for the Minutemen. If UMass wants to retain its new status among the league’s elite, a strong game at BC on Friday is a must.

Boston University and Merrimack have the only home-and-home series of the weekend, and both could start their “third string” goalies. BU sophomore John Curry emerged from the shadows early in the season to win three straight games and Merrimack junior Frank McLaughlin won his first career start last Saturday vs. UMass after Jim Healey and Casey Guenther gave up a combined eight goals at UMass the night before.

IN THE POLLS

Team	USAT	USCHO
Boston College	1	1
New Hampshire	7	7
Maine	9	10

Others receiving votes:
 Boston U., Massachusetts, UMass Lowell

WEEKEND SCHEDULE

Friday, November 12

- Massachusetts at Boston College *
- Merrimack at Boston University *
- Maine at Northeastern *
- Providence at New Hampshire (NHPTV) *
- Colgate at UMass Lowell

Saturday, November 13

- Boston University at Merrimack *
- Maine at UMass Lowell *

Sunday, November 14

- Northeastern at Providence (2pm - COX) *
- Mercyhurst at Massachusetts (3pm)

* Hockey East game

Games start at 7pm unless indicated.

All game times are Eastern Time.

HOCKEY EAST STANDINGS

Team	GP	W	L	T	Pts	Overall	Offense	Defense
Massachusetts	5	3	2	0	6	5-4-0	3.00 GPG	2.67 GAPG
Boston College	2	2	0	0	4	4-1-0	3.80 GPG	2.20 GAPG
Boston University	3	2	1	0	4	3-3-0	2.50 GPG	3.33 GAPG
Maine	4	2	2	0	4	6-5-0	3.00 GPG	2.00 GAPG
Providence	4	2	2	0	4	4-3-0	3.29 GPG	2.57 GAPG
New Hampshire	2	1	1	0	2	4-2-1	3.29 GPG	3.14 GAPG
Merrimack	4	1	3	0	2	3-5-0	3.12 GPG	4.25 GAPG
Northeastern	0	0	0	0	0	3-3-1	3.43 GPG	3.86 GAPG
UMass Lowell	2	0	2	0	0	3-2-0	3.00 GPG	2.60 GAPG