



# PRESS RELEASE

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## **HOCKEY EAST WELL REPRESENTED AT WINTER OLYMPICS** ***Current and former players and coaches playing big roles in Torino***

The arm of Hockey East extends well beyond just the playing rosters at the 2006 Winter Olympics in Torino, Italy. Dotted among the individuals involved in the sport's most prestigious international tournament are at least 20 who have direct ties to Hockey East.

The men's team representing the United States is dressing five players that have skated under the Hockey East banner. A trio of former Boston University stars in Keith Tkachuk, Chris Drury and Rick DiPietro will lead the team, and fellow former Terrier and current Boston Bruins' head coach Mike Sullivan will be an assistant behind the USA bench. (One of his own current players, former Friar Hal Gill, is on Team USA's taxi squad, and will play if an injury fells one of his teammates.) Two former BC Eagles will also have a hand in Team USA's fortunes, as Brian Gionta is making his first Olympic appearance alongside U.S. veteran Bill Guerin. Gionta scored one of Team USA's goals in a 3-3 tie with Latvia yesterday. New Hockey East entry Vermont initially saw former blueliner Aaron Miller named to the U.S. squad, but an injury will prevent him from competing. The Catamounts are proud to be represented in the Olympics by Martin St. Louis, who skates for Team Canada, while host Italy is coached by Mickey Goulet (UNH '69).

Another familiar face to UVM fans will be that of Mike Gilligan, who coached the Catamounts from 1984 to 2003. He is assisting Ben Smith, the one-time Northeastern coach, as a member of the U.S. women's team coaching staff. Smith's other assistant is Alana Blahoski, who played at Providence College in the early nineties. Their squad includes UNH alum Tricia Dunn-Luoma, 2004 NU graduate Chanda Gunn, and Katie King, an assistant coach with the rising BC women's program. King already has five points in the tourney, including one goal in each of Team USA's three preliminary round games, and Gunn has been in net for two of the U.S.'s three wins so far. Former Northeastern sniper Vicky Sunohara is wearing Team Canada colors for the tourney, while Raffi Wolf, a senior star at Maine in Hockey East's inaugural season of 2002-03, is playing for the German Olympic team.

Three Hockey East officials have gotten the call to officiate in Torino. Danyel Howard and Julie Piacentini, who have worked regular assignments for Hockey East since the inception of the women's league, are working the women's Olympic tournament, while Kevin Redding has been assigned to the men's tournament.

The Hockey East Association is a 10-team Division-I college hockey conference, with offices based in Wakefield, Mass. Founded in 1983, the conference is entering its 22nd season as one of the premier collegiate hockey conferences in the country. Hockey East teams are consistently ranked among the top programs in the nation and member teams have won four NCAA championships in the past 13 years. The conference also sponsors a women's league, founded in 2001, which currently features eight Division-I programs.

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