



Weekend Preview

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: MARCH 2, 2006

FOUR TEAMS TAKE AIM AT THE TITLE

Very little determined headed into the final weekend

The playoff teams have been decided, and Boston College will be a quarterfinal host. Other than that, it's one huge mystery as to how the Hockey East tournament will unfold.

There are just two games left to play for all 10 Hockey East teams, and yet four of them still have a chance to win or share the Hockey East regular season title. Each of the four could end up with the No. 1 seed headed into the postseason.

Providence can't win the regular season title, but wins all potential tiebreakers for the remaining high seeds (2-4). The complicated scenarios are simplified in knowing that the Friars win all high-seed tiebreakers and UNH would win against all the other teams. BU wins all tiebreakers vs. BC and Maine, and Maine wins all tiebreakers vs. BC. Currently alone in first place, BC will have to win the title outright in order to claim the top tourney seed.

In the event the Eagles get swept in this weekend's marquee home-and-home set vs. UNH, they could end up with a seed as low as No. 4. Streaking with a 15-2-1 run in midseason, the Eagles are only 4-6 since. UNH, meanwhile, has started to gel down the stretch, with just one loss in its last seven games, and wins at both Maine and BU. BC can stamp out UNH's last-ditch title hopes with a single point in the series, tonight at home or Saturday at UNH. A win by UNH in either opens the door for BU or Maine to claim the No. 1 seed.

Boston University will play Beanpot rival Northeastern in a home-and-home series, and the Huskies are sure to be motivated spoilers. The Terriers are hoping for a sweep and a shot at their first regular season title since 1999-2000. Amazingly, Maine has only won the regular season championship three times and its last came way back in 1994-95 (shared with BU.) Like the Terriers, the Black Bears have a reasonable shot at their overdue title, but their opponent this weekend will have more than spoiling as motivation. The Minutemen are in a playoff race themselves, seeking to stay ahead of UMass Lowell for the No. 7 spot. Lowell trails the Minutemen by just one point headed into a hosted series vs. Vermont. UVM, meanwhile still has its eye on the No. 5 seed, currently held by Providence. Of all the

ties that the Friars could end up in, the only one they lose is a tie with Vermont. Providence needs at least two points in a home-and-home series vs. Merrimack this weekend to stay alive in the hunt for home ice advantage.

When the dust settles after this weekend's action, the quarterfinal pairings will be set. The only thing known right now is that Boston College will host, and will start its series on Thursday night, March 9. If UNH and/or Providence host, they will also begin their hosted series that Thursday. If BU and/or Maine host, they would open their quarterfinal round on Friday.

With all the drama surrounding the final weekend in the men's league, it's easy to forget that the women's championship is going on as well, at Northeastern. UNH, the top-ranked team in the nation, pits a 26-game unbeaten streak against Maine at noon on Saturday, while BC plays Providence in the other semifinal. The title game is Sunday at 1pm.

WEEKEND SCHEDULE

Thursday, March 2

UNH at Boston College (CN8 - 7:30 pm) *

Friday, March 3

Providence at Merrimack *

Massachusetts at Maine *

Vermont at UMass Lowell (NESN) *

Boston University at Northeastern *

Saturday, March 4

Merrimack at Providence (6:30 pm) *

Massachusetts at Maine (WABI / WPFO) *

Vermont at UMass Lowell *

Northeastern at Boston University *

Boston College at UNH (NHPTV) *

* Hockey East game

Games start at 7pm EST unless indicated

RANKINGS

TEAM	PWR	USAT	USCHO
Boston University	4	3	3
Maine	10	7	7
Boston College	12	9	9
New Hampshire	14	12	15
Providence	17	-	ORV
Vermont	22	ORV	17

ORV – others receiving votes

HOCKEY EAST STANDINGS

Team	GP	W	L	T	Pts	Overall	Remaining Games
Boston College #	25	17	7	1	35	20-10-2	UNH, at UNH
Boston University ^	25	15	7	3	33	19-9-4	at NU, NU
Maine ^	25	16	8	1	33	23-10-1	UMass (2)
New Hampshire ^	25	13	7	5	31	17-11-6	at BC, BC
Providence ^	25	13	9	3	29	16-13-3	at MC, MC
Vermont ^	25	10	9	6	26	18-10-6	at UML (2)
Massachusetts ^	25	10	14	1	21	13-18-1	at Maine (2)
UMass Lowell ^	25	9	14	2	20	12-18-2	UVM (2)
Northeastern	25	3	15	7	13	3-22-7	BU, at BU
Merrimack	25	2	18	5	9	5-22-5	PC, at PC

clinched home ice in the quarterfinal round ^ clinched playoff berth



Playoff Picture

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HOCKEY EAST STANDINGS

Team	Pos.	Seed	GP	W	L	T	Pts (Pos)	Overall	Remaining Games
Boston College #	1-4		25	17	7	1	35 (39)	20-10-2	UNH, at UNH
Boston University ^	1-5		25	15	7	3	33 (37)	19-9-4	at NU, NU
Maine ^	1-5		25	16	8	1	33 (37)	23-10-1	UMass (2)
New Hampshire ^	1-5		25	13	7	5	31 (35)	17-11-6	at BC, BC
Providence ^	2-6		25	13	9	3	29 (33)	16-13-3	at MC, MC
Vermont ^	5-6		25	10	9	6	26 (30)	18-10-6	at UML (2)
Massachusetts ^	7-8		25	10	14	1	21 (25)	13-18-1	at Maine (2)
UMass Lowell ^	7-8		25	9	14	2	20 (24)	12-18-2	UVM (2)
Northeastern	-		25	3	15	7	13 (17)	3-22-7	BU, at BU
Merrimack	-		25	2	18	5	9 (13)	5-22-5	PC, at PC

clinched home ice in the quarterfinal round ^ clinched playoff berth

Tiebreakers

If two teams finish with the same number of points in the standings, the following tiebreakers will be used, in this order, to determine seeding:

1. Head-to-head results between the tied teams
2. Number of wins in conference play
3. Best record against the first-place team(s), then the second-place team(s), then the third-place team(s), etc.
4. Coin flip

If more than two teams finish in a tie, the same criteria will be applied to reduce the number of teams tied, and then the process will commence again.

Head-to-head tiebreaker scenarios

- BU wins tiebreaker vs. BC, 2-1
- Maine wins tiebreaker vs. BC, 3-0
- BC leads tiebreaker vs. UNH, 1-0
Home-and-home series starts tonight.
- BU wins tiebreaker vs. Maine, 3-0
- UNH wins tiebreaker vs. BU, 2-1
- PC wins tiebreaker vs. BU, 2-0-1
- UNH wins tiebreaker vs. Maine, 2-1
- PC wins tiebreaker vs. Maine, 2-1
- PC-UNH series tied, 1-1-1
PC would win second and third tiebreakers.
- UVM wins tiebreaker vs. PC, 2-0-1
- UML wins tiebreaker vs. UMass, 2-1

3-way and 4-way tiebreaker scenarios

If these teams finish tied: They will be seeded in this order:

BC, BU, Maine, UNH	UNH, BU, Maine, BC
BC, BU, Maine	BU, Maine, BC
BC, BU, UNH	UNH, BU, BC
BC, Maine, UNH	UNH, Maine, BC
BU, Maine, UNH	UNH, BU, Maine
BU, Maine, UNH, PC	PC, UNH, BU, Maine
BU, Maine, PC	PC, BU, Maine
BU, UNH, PC	PC, UNH, BU
Maine, UNH, PC	PC, UNH, Maine

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What can happen tonight?

- A BC win guarantees the Eagles at least a share of their fourth consecutive regular season title.
- A BC win or tie eliminates UNH from contention for the No. 1 seed and a share of the regular season title.