



# PRESS RELEASE

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## MINNESOTANS MAKING THEIR MARK IN HOCKEY EAST

WAKEFIELD, MA – In the hockey-mad state of Minnesota, it's not surprising that many of the talented, home-grown high school players look to stay close to the nest when deciding on a college hockey program. But a number have ventured to New England, and several players from the Land of 10,000 Lakes have found a second home with Hockey East schools.

Clearly, Hockey East is best known for drawing players from the Northeast, and from north of the border. However, Minnesota-born players are creating a legacy of their own here. Two of the best goaltenders in the Hockey East – Vermont's Joe Fallon and Boston University's John Curry – hail from the North Star State.

Fallon, from Bemidji, MN, was a highly regarded prospect coming out of high school (drafted by the Chicago Blackhawks in the 6<sup>th</sup> round), and his play for the 8-4-1 Catamounts hasn't diminished those lofty expectations. Heading into the winter break, Fallon was the top-rated netminder in Hockey East with a 1.44 goals against average in nine league games and a .936 save percentage (also tops in the league). Only a junior, Fallon already owns seven Vermont season and career records, and his 13 shutouts are tops all-time at UVM (he broke Boston Bruin Tim Thomas' record of 10 last season).

Conversely, Curry, from Shorewood, MN, was an unheralded netminder when he walked onto Coach Jack Parker's Boston University club. And all he's done, after laying claim to the No. 1 starting job, is backstop the Terriers to last year's Hockey East regular season and tournament championships, while collecting 1<sup>st</sup> team Hockey East All-Star and 2<sup>nd</sup> team All-American honors. He's also a two-time runner-up for Hockey East Player of the Year honors. This year, Curry, an assistant captain, has picked up right where he left off, almost single-handedly keeping the 6-3-5 Terriers in contention most nights with his stellar play. His 1.78 goals against average is second in the league, and his .930 save percentage is good for fourth. Helping Curry on the "D" is BU senior Tom Morrow, from Afton, MN. Morrow has appeared in 114 career games, including 41 straight, and has collected 10 career points.

Across town, at Boston College, freshman defenseman Carl Snee, a Pittsburgh Penguins draft choice from Nissawa, MN, is turning heads. He has played in all 13 of the Eagles games, and has come up big in some of BC's biggest contests. In a two-game set against reigning national champion Wisconsin, Snee got assists on both game-winning goals as the Eagles swept a pair. Junior Joe Adams, from Wayzata, MN, has also contributed for the Eagles, playing in 10 games this year. Last year, he earned Hockey East All-Academic Team honors.

To the north, at the University of Maine, senior defenseman Mike Lundin from Apple Valley, MN, the 2003 Associated Press Minnesota Hockey Player of the Year, has been a workhorse for the Coach Tim Whitehead. He's played in 133 career games – more than any current Black Bear – and has two goals and five assists for seven points in 13 games this year. The 2004 NHL draft choice of the Tampa Bay Lightning is a three-time Hockey East All-Academic Team member and a business major. Teammate Bryan Plaszcz is a sophomore defenseman who also comes from Apple Valley. He's played in 12 matches this season, scoring a goal against Minnesota in the annual Hall of Fame Game in St. Paul.

At New Hampshire, senior forward Shawn Vinz from Rochester, MN, is enjoying a career year for Coach Dick Umile, having scored his first collegiate goal and then adding a second goal – a short-handed tally – 10 days later. Vinz has played the majority of the season as the 'Cats fourth line right wing and is primarily used on the No. 2 ranked Wildcats' top penalty kill unit.

Coach Blaise MacDonald has two Minnesota natives suiting up for his UMass Lowell River Hawks – Jake Pence and Ian Schaser. Pence is a senior defenseman from Owatonna, MN, and Schaser is a freshman forward from Eden Prairie. Pence has played in 86 career games, and has collected nine assists. Schaser has played in two games for UML this season, making his collegiate debut on Oct. 14 at Minnesota Duluth. The University of Massachusetts in Amherst, meanwhile, also has two Minnesota-bred players. Justin Braun, a freshman blueliner from Vadnais Heights, MN, ranks second among the Minutemen defensemen in scoring, with 5 points (all assists). His teammate, John Wessbecker, is a sophomore defenseman from Victoria, MN.

At Vermont, Fallon's teammate Corey Carlson from Two Harbors, MN, has two goals and three assists for five points in 13 games. The sophomore scored two goals in Vermont's 4-1 win at No. 8 Miami in the championship of the Ice Breaker Invitational. For his career, Carlson has collected eight goals and 12 assists for 20 points in 51 games.

Merrimack College doesn't have any Minnesota players currently on the roster, but a 2006 graduate, Bryan Schmidt from Bloomington, MN, is now patrolling the blueline for the AHL Manchester Monarchs. Schmidt finished his Warrior career with 34 goals, a record for Merrimack defensemen. He was also a two-time finalist for Walter Brown Award.

The Hockey East Association is a 10-team, Division I college hockey conference, with offices based in Wakefield, MA. Founded in 1983, the league has won four NCAA championships in the past 13 years. The league also sponsors an eight-team women's league which began play in 2002-03.

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