



Weekend Preview

Brion O'Connor
Director of Public Relations
Hockey East Association
 591 North Ave – #2
 Wakefield, MA 01880
 Phone: (781) 245-2122
 Cell: (978) 609-7224
 boconnor@HockeyEastOnline.com

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HE SQUADS READY FOR TOURNAMENT ACTION

Maine, UNH in Florida; UMass, UML & PC head west; UVM stays home

Only Coach Jerry York's Boston College Eagles will be idle during the upcoming holiday weekend, as eight Hockey East squads prep for seven different holiday tournaments, and Merrimack travels to Robert Morris University for two games.

Maine and New Hampshire are the two teams with the potential of transforming a tournament final into an all-Hockey East affair, as the squads head south to play in the Colleague Classic in Estero, FL. Maine opens the proceedings with a 4 p.m. face-off Friday opposite Western Michigan, while the Wildcats take on Cornell in the second half of the double-header. Coach Dick Umile's UNH squad comes in with the hot hand, ranked No. 2 nationally and owners of a 13-2-1 mark, including nine wins in a row. The only two losses suffered by UNH (one-goal setbacks to UMass and Yale) came in late October, and the Wildcats have gone undefeated since.

Maine, meanwhile, is hoping to shake off the goal-scoring doldrums and recapture the touch that resulted in seven goals against Northeastern on Dec. 9. In their last match, in Portland on Dec. 16, the Black Bears peppered Mercyhurst goalie Jordan Wakefield with 46 shots, but could only salvage a 1-1 tie, thanks to a Billy Ryan (Milton, MA) goal. Don't be surprised to see Coach Tim Whitehead's forwards crashing the net early and often against Western Michigan.

Vermont is the only league school to host a tournament, as the Catamounts return to Burlington after winning their non-conference tilt against long-time rival St. Lawrence, 4-0, in Canton, NY. The Catamount Cup opens with Union squaring off against St. Cloud State, while Vermont takes on Rensselaer in the nightcap. Expect to see Joe Fallon (Bemidji, MN) in goal for Coach Kevin

Sneddon's squad. Fallon's whitewash of the Saints was his third shutout of the year, while Vermont showcased a balanced scoring attack, getting goals from four different players.

Boston University and Northeastern are the only other Hockey East teams staying in New England, though they're heading in different directions. Coach Jack Parker's Terriers motor north to New Hampshire and the Ledyard Tourney, where they will match up against the Dartmouth Big Green in the opening round. The Terriers will have extra motivation, as Coach Parker is just two wins shy of becoming the fourth collegiate coach to reach 750 career victories. Coach Greg Cronin's Huskies, meanwhile, travel southwest to Storrs, CT, where they'll take part in the Toyota UConn Hockey Classic. The Huskies will be tested thanks to a tough first-round draw against Colgate, with the winner moving to the final against UConn or Holy Cross.

Coach Don "Toot" Cahoon's UMass Minutemen will trade volleys with Ferris State in the opening round of the Mariucci Classic in Minnesota. The winner of that match will face the victor of the Minnesota/Alabama-Huntsville tilt. Again, the Mass Attack is coming off a long break, which means standout goalie Jon Quick (Hampden, CT) may have to be sharp until the Minutemen get their skating legs under them.

In Colorado's Mile High City, the UMass Lowell River Hawks hope to soar past Brown to reach the final of the Wells Fargo Denver Cup. Coach Blaise MacDonald will continue to rely on captain Jason Tejchma (Muskegon, MI) and the River Hawk 15 rookies to provide a spark. Lowell rookies have accounted for 17 of the squad's 39 goals.

The Providence Friars are also traveling west, to take part in the Badger Hockey Showdown at

Wisconsin. Coach Tim Army's squad locks horns with Lake Superior State on Friday, with the winner advancing to the final against Clarkson or Wisconsin. Merrimack Coach Mark Dennehy's Warriors had the longest layoff of any Hockey East squad, last playing on Dec. 5. However, the outcome of that game – a 3-0 blanking of a tenacious UMass squad – was a result that the Warriors can build on when they meet the Colonials for a two-game set this weekend. Goalie Patrick Watson (Waltham, MA), who was sensational against the Minutemen, should see plenty of action.

UPCOMING GAMES

Friday, December 29

Merrimack at Robert Morris (8pm)
Catamount Cup at Vermont
 Union vs. St. Cloud (4pm)
 Rensselaer at Vermont (7pm)
 Ledyard Tourney at Dartmouth
 North Dakota vs. St. Lawrence (4pm)
 Boston University at Dartmouth (7pm)
Toyota UConn Hockey Classic at Connecticut
 Northeastern vs. Colgate (4pm)
 Holy Cross at Connecticut (7pm)
Badger Hockey Showdown at Wisconsin
 Providence vs. Lake Superior State (5pm)
 Clarkson at Wisconsin (8pm)
 Mariucci Classic at Minnesota
 Massachusetts vs. Ferris State (5pm)
 Alabama-Huntsville at Minnesota (8pm)
 Wells Fargo Denver Cup
 UMass Lowell vs. Brown (6:30pm)
 Mercyhurst at Denver (9pm)
 College Classic at Estero, FL
 Maine vs. Western Michigan (4pm)
 New Hampshire vs. Cornell (7pm)

Saturday, December 30

Merrimack at Robert Morris (8pm)
 Ledyard Tourney at Dartmouth (4/7pm)
 Boston Univ. vs. N. Dakota/St. Lawrence
Toyota UConn Hockey Classic (4/7pm)
 Northeastern vs. Holy Cross/UConn
 Badger Hockey Showdown (5/8pm)
 Providence vs. Clarkson/Wisconsin
 Mariucci Classic at Minnesota (5/8pm)
 UMass vs. Ala.-Huntsville/Minnesota
 Wells Fargo Denver Cup (6/9pm)
 UMass Lowell vs. Mercyhurst/Denver
 Florida College Classic
 Maine vs. New Hampshire/Cornell (4/7:30pm)
 UNH vs. Maine/W. Michigan (4/7:30pm)
Catamount Cup at Vermont (4/7pm)
 Union/St. Cloud at Vermont

All games Eastern Standard Time

2006-07 HOCKEY EAST STANDINGS

Team	GP	W	L	T	Pts	Overall	Goals	Goals Against
New Hampshire	12	10	1	1	21	13-2-1	70	31
Vermont	9	6	2	1	13	10-5-1	43	25
Boston College	10	6	3	1	13	9-5-1	42	37
Boston University	11	4	3	4	12	6-3-5	32	26
Maine	9	5	3	1	11	10-3-2	57	30
Massachusetts	10	5	4	1	11	8-5-2	42	36
Providence	11	3	7	1	7	4-11-1	33	52
UMass Lowell	10	2	6	2	6	3-10-4	39	52
Northeastern	12	2	8	2	6	4-9-2	37	46
Merrimack	10	2	8	0	4	2-12-1	18	53