



# Men's Weekend Preview

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## LEAGUE MATCH-UPS HITTING THE RIGHT NOTES

### ***UML-NU on tap tonight; UNH-MC go for two; UMass hosts BU, PC***

Entering the last month of regular season play, the Hockey East playoff picture is starting to look like a frantic round of musical chairs.

The weekly *Hockey East Friday Night* telecast on NESN features two teams in the thick of the hunt for home ice in the playoffs, with only three points separating 3<sup>rd</sup>-place Vermont and 6<sup>th</sup>-place Maine. But this weekend, Maine has the home-field advantage, as the Catamounts come to Orono. The key for Tim Whitehead is to convince his Black Bears that they have the edge at Alfond Arena, where Maine holds a 6-5 record, compared to 7-3-1 on the road (and a sparkling 4-0-1 on neutral ice). Last week, the Black Bears picked up a win and a loss against league-leading New Hampshire. Vermont also went .500, splitting with Providence in Burlington. However, the Catamounts have proven a tough out no matter where they play, despite only outscoring opponents by a half-goal a game, and their defense-first philosophy has helped them post 10 league wins. NESN's Tom Caron and Tim Sweeney have the call.

The team in the 5<sup>th</sup> spot, Massachusetts, has two games at home, the first against the 2<sup>nd</sup>-place Boston University Terriers followed by the 8<sup>th</sup>-place Providence Friars. The Minutemen turned a few heads with a emphatic outing against Boston College at the Conte Forum last Friday, jumping to a 3-0 lead on their way to winning 5-3, allowing UMass to capture the season series for the first-time ever against BC. However, the next night the Mass Attack was edged at home by a determined UMass Lowell squad, 2-1, thanks to the spectacular goaltending of River Hawk freshman Nevin Hamilton (Ashland, MA). The Minutemen will again rely on a stingy defense that ought to be tested by a BU squad that erupted for four goals against Northeastern in the opening round of the Beanpot Tournament. John Curry's (Shorewood, MN) shutout of the Huskies on Monday shows the BU netminder is on top of his game, presenting the Minutemen with another challenge.

The Providence Friars hope to build on the momentum that a 4-1 win against Vermont last Saturday provided, and will visit Boston College on Friday before heading west to Amherst. Netminder Tyler Sims (Grand Blanc, WI) was strong in both Vermont matches, giving up only four goals over both games, including Friday's 3-2 loss to the Catamounts. BC Coach Jerry York said he was pleased with his team's effort in a 2-1 Beanpot semifinal win over Harvard, and noted that junior goalie Cory Schneider (Marblehead, MA) was particularly sharp while protecting a one-goal lead.

In the weekend's one home-and-home series, Merrimack travels to Durham, NH, to take on the Wildcats, before hosting UNH on Saturday. In their last outing, the young Warriors fought Northeastern stride-for-stride and check-for-check before dropping a tough 1-0 decision in overtime last Friday. Again, senior Jim Healey (Holyrood, NF) was solid for Coach Mark Dennehy in the nets. The Wildcats, meanwhile, are coming off a weekend split with Maine, losing the opener, 4-2, at the Verizon Wireless Center in Manchester, NH, before rebounding with a well-earned 2-1 triumph in Durham behind the superb goaltending of junior Kevin Regan (South Boston, MA). Given the recent results of the two goalies, the match-ups this weekend could be low-scoring affairs.

Before any of that action, however, UMass Lowell and Northeastern will get the weekend rolling tonight when the two squads meet at the Tsongas Arena. UML Coach Blaise MacDonald has a nice problem, with superb freshman goalie Carter Hutton (Thunder Bay, ON) returning from injury at the exact time that a classmate, Hamilton, has started to shine for the River Hawks. The Huntington Hounds will be looking to rebound from their Monday loss to Boston University in the Beanpot. Despite that loss, the Huskies are sporting a robust 6-3-2 record in their last 11 games, due to balanced scoring and tremendous goaltending supplied by freshman Brad Theissen (Aldergrove, BC).



**Catamounts, Black Bears tangle**  
 NESN's Hockey East coverage continues Friday when the Maine Black Bears and Vermont Catamounts meet at Alfond Arena in Orono. Coverage begins with *Hockey East Friday Night Live*, at 7:00 pm, followed by the opening face-off at 7:30.

#### RECENT RESULTS

##### Monday, February 5

*Beanpot Tournament at Boston, MA*  
 Boston University 4, Northeastern 0  
 Boston College 3, Harvard 1

#### UPCOMING GAMES

##### Thursday, February 8

Northeastern at UMass Lowell \*

##### Friday, February 9

Vermont at Maine (7:30pm) \* NESN  
 Boston College at Providence \*  
 Boston University at Massachusetts \*  
 Merrimack at New Hampshire \* NHPTV %

##### Saturday, February 10

Providence at Massachusetts \*  
 New Hampshire at Merrimack \*  
 Vermont at Maine (8pm) \* CSTV

##### Monday, February 12

*Beanpot Tournament at Boston, MA*  
 Harvard vs. Northeastern, 5pm  
 Boston U. vs. Boston College, 8pm NESN

\* Hockey East game  
 % Hannaford Kids Club event  
 All games Eastern Standard Time

## 2006-07 HOCKEY EAST STANDINGS

Team	GP	W	L	T	Pts	Overall	Goals	Goals Against
New Hampshire	19	15	3	1	31	20-5-1	74 (101)	34 (52)
Boston University	21	10	4	7	27	13-5-8	52 (70)	36 (46)
Vermont	19	10	5	4	24	15-9-4	41 (68)	37 (52)
Boston College	20	11	8	1	23	14-10-1	58 (77)	46 (65)
Massachusetts	19	10	7	2	22	13-9-4	48 (74)	45 (63)
Maine	19	10	8	1	21	17-8-2	55 (95)	48 (64)
Northeastern	21	7	10	4	18	10-12-4	47 (67)	53 (70)
Providence	19	6	12	1	13	7-18-1	39 (49)	50 (77)
UMass Lowell	20	3	14	3	9	4-19-6	36 (59)	63 (91)
Merrimack	19	3	14	2	8	3-19-4	20 (29)	56 (81)