

2011-12 WHEA Preseason Media Teleconference

Brian McCloskey, UNH head coach

Opening comments

We had a team that was in transition last year and we are continuing that this year. We have three freshmen on the blue line not a lot of 30 point scorers returning on offense. A lot of our talent is in the sophomore and freshman classes, which bodes well for the future but will be a growing process this year. The big thing is how much we can improve between now and Christmas because the second half of the season is the majority of the conference schedule.

On the league

The league is incredibly balanced. Other than BU, with a couple of Olympians, I don't think there's a lot of separation between the teams. There are going to be a lot of close games. There's not as big a gap as five years ago. I look for a topsy-turvy regular season.

On the goaltending situation

We've got a freshman in Jen Gilligan competing for the job with senior Lindsey Minton. Jen has good size and she's an accomplished goalie. It will be a battle between her and Lindsey and that's indicative of the team. I expect them to both see time. We think highly of Jen or we wouldn't have brought her in. That's the most daunting issue, is that we may have to rely on a lot of freshmen in the back line, including three freshmen on defense.

Team overview

I think I feel pretty comfortable with my team defensively. We have a handful of veterans back there. The question is whether we can generate enough offense. I see us being in every game, but the big challenge is we're not going to have the luxury of making a lot of mistakes. We're not going to score five or six goals a night. I think you're going to see a more balanced effort. That's going to wind up being our formula.

On the team's youth

It's an exciting time having all these young kids, but we have a lot of growing to do. It's an interesting transition for me with two juniors and a sophomore as captains. We might have one senior in our lineup and we do not have a big junior class either. We might be 75-to-80 percent underclassmen. Just like Martine Garland a few years back, Katie Brock and Kailey Chappell are very mature for their age and we have the benefit of not turning them over next year.

On the Hockey East tourney being played in Hyannis

I think it's terrific. The league has tried a variety of venues through the years. The league has grown in a lot of ways, not the least of which is competitive, and this .

Impact freshmen

It's hard because we're just two or three days in and it's tough to single them out. We have a solid class that is going to contribute right away. We have seven players who are going to play a lot. They may be not as heralded as some other players, but I like the mix of this group. It's a hardworking group with a good skill set.