

**WOMEN'S HOCKEY EAST SEASON OPENING
COACHES MEDIA TELECONFERENCE
(SEPT. 20, 2012)**

NORTHEASTERN HEAD COACH DAVE FLINT

On this season's team

"I'm excited about this year; we have a good returning nucleus. We only have three freshmen, so it's a little different than last year when we had nine new kids. There won't be a lot of getting kids up to speed, because everybody should be up to speed.

"I'm optimistic that we can we can come out of the gates pretty fast and pick up where we left off last season. There's obviously still going to be some growing pains. We lost Florence (Schelling) in net, but I'm pretty optimistic moving forward and with the start of the season that we're going to hit the ground running and pick up where we left off."

On the goaltending situation heading into the season

"Right now Chloe Desjardins is who we're going to look to. She was brought here to be Florence's replacement, and I didn't get her as much time as I would have liked to last year. Its always tough when you have a goalie like Florence to take her out of the net when every game is so important, but Chloe came in in great shape and she's ready to go.

"I'm expecting Kelsey O'Sullivan and Ayla Frank to push (Desjardins) and be ready if she struggles. I think at the start Chloe is going to be my go-to, and we are going to see how it goes from there. If somebody establishes themselves as a real strong number two, we might get in a situation where we might be alternating. But for right now, it's looking like Chloe is going to be the starter."

On Casey Pickett, Kendall Coyne, and the Northeastern offense

"Those two had great years last year they worked extremely well together. They're a pretty dangerous combination on the ice whether it's 5-on-5, 4-on-4 or 4-on-5. They can always make teams pay. They both came in, in great shape, so we're looking for them to do the same thing they did last year.

"We also have the addition now of Paige Savage, who is a great player. She's a freshman, and she's going to take a little bit of that scoring pressure off (Coyne and Pickett), Rachel Llanes and Brittany Esposito. I'm hoping we don't rely on Kendall and Casey as much as we did last year, and hopefully we can get a little more scoring from some other areas."

On winning the Hockey East Regular Season Championship in 2012 and goals for this season

"I think it was a big stepping stone for us last year to accomplish that, and now our girls know that we can compete with anyone in the nation. Our goal this year is a trip to the NCAA Tournament. I think the girls were disappointed that we just fell short last year with the season we had.

“Our other goal is to retain the regular season championships. We still have not won a tournament championship yet, so those are all goals for the season.

I think the biggest thing for them last year and even the year before going to the conference finals, it’s just a confidence thing with them. They know they can do it and they know they’re right there with the best teams. I think that confidence is always a big thing especially in women’s hockey, and if you have a confident team that believes in each other you can accomplish some great things.”

On the expanded playoff format and bringing the WHEA Championship Tournament back to Hyannis, Mass.

“I think it was a great experience in Hyannis last year. I know some people, who were more or less fans, couldn’t understand why we were moving it. It was a full venue, and that’s what our kids want to play in: a packed house and a great venue, and they really took care of us down there.

“I think all the coaches thought it was a success. It’s exciting too that now the league has really grown and we’re at eight teams in the playoffs where maybe when I first started in the league in 2008 there weren’t eight solid teams. Now, there’s so much parity and on any given day number eight can be number one. It makes for an exciting season and you can’t take any nights off.

“I think it’s a testament to the league and how it has grown, and I think Hockey East probably has the most parity in and out of all the leagues out there, so we’re looking forward to having the eight teams compete this year.”

On the three freshmen

“We only brought in three freshmen, and Paige Savage is a national team player. She is a big strong power forward, and I expect her to make an immediate impact in our lineup. She is a great player.

“Back on defense we have Jordan Hampton, who was on the U-18 national team last year. She’s a good skating, puck-moving defenseman who will replace (Stephanie) Gavronsky.

“Then we have Tori Hickel who can play forward and defense. She is a good two-way player and very skilled. I’m looking for the three of them to step into the lineup and contribute all in different ways. I think they’re going to be a good compliment to the returning core that we have.”