

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

**NEW HAMPSHIRE HEAD COACH BRIAN McCLOSKEY**

**Can you talk about the Wildcats and what you hope to accomplish early on in the season?**

“Well, we have a large freshman class this year, we have eleven newcomers and we returned the majority of our core I think we’ll be a lot more competitive challenging for the top half of the league. We can get better over the first half. We have a very tough schedule, the toughest we’ve ever undertaken, which I think is an indication that we’re going to be a pretty good hockey team. We’ve got Minnesota coming here; we’re going to Wisconsin so there are several teams in our league that are going to be ranked coming out of the gate. But I think we’ll be right in the middle of the hunt, in a competitive place, for the Hockey East championship.”

**Can you talk about your goalie situation?**

“It’s going to be a deep position for us. We have two freshmen, one from Quebec, one from Finland. They’re very mature. I think they’re going to challenge right out of the gate and that will be critical. Last year, our goaltending was inconsistent without question. When you don’t have goaltending it’s certainly going to effect team play. But I think out of this group, we’ve got the two freshmen and we’ve got the two freshmen last year that will be sophomores in Jenn Gilligan and Moe Bradley, and they’re going to fight it out. If we can get solid goaltending, I think we’re going to be a much more dangerous team up front and we’re going to be very deep on the line.”

**In terms of your returning player who is in position to make that next step?**

“Arielle O’Neill didn’t put up a lot of points last year but she’ll be a junior. Kristina Lavoie scored a fair bit last year but didn’t quite have the support because we weren’t deep up front. I think those two for sure are going to continue to be big factors. Nicole Gifford will be a junior; she’s been a very steady player for us, but not a prolific scorer. I think what we’re going to have is a very balanced lineup and if we have good goaltending, I like our defense. We have Kristine Horn who moved back there last year, went kind of unheralded because we didn’t have, again, the depth. We have a couple freshmen that are going to step right in, so we’re going to finally be fairly solid back there. Kristine Horn scored about 10 goals for us last year from the backend so I think she’s going to have a huge year.”

**Can you talk about the strength of the league and the talk about expanding the playoffs?**

“The league has really established itself, it’s not just having one team or two teams in any given year. In certain years BU, BC, Northeastern have been at the top of the east. I think that the parody that we saw and what’s impressed me was that those teams evolved and are established now. I think the same thing’s going to happen with Maine and the same with Vermont. I have a feeling that our league is top to bottom maybe the toughest in the country. There’s no question we continue to attract the best players in the country

and without a doubt Boston College has a major impact player but all the top team have those players. What's interesting, kind of like the sport itself, is all the teams that traditionally are down at the bottom are doing a much better job of getting solid players and the gap is really narrowing. I think the bottom half of our league is going to be four very good teams."

**Can you talk about your captain's leadership and setting the tone for the team?**

"The nice thing about our captain is their all returning. We have Katie Brock, Kailey Chappell and Nicole Gifford, two seniors and a junior. They led us last year and their doing a great job, they're really taking the bull by the horns and they're all solid players, no superstars but I think we're going to have solid leadership from kids who are repeat captains. It's not often you get that chance. One of the unfortunate things is that with excessive classes you have to constantly turn over and that could be a good thing but there is defiantly merit in having repeat captains. There not the kind of kids who are going to be star players but they're all really solid, no ego and I think they will do a super job of guiding the team early on because we have so much youth that will be in key situations right out of the gate."

**What are some of your team goals? What do you want to improve upon from last year?**

"Last year despite the record we were defensively a really solid team and I think we'll be that way again. I think we'll be a better puck handling team but we've got to prove that we can score which was a real challenge for us last year. We've got to find someone who can give us competitive goal tending. If your starter isn't going to be in the .920 save percentage range then your going to have a hard time finishing in the top half of the league. Those types of goaltenders change the equation, we would like somebody who would at least be in that .920 range. The first ten games I would like to us establish balanced scoring, which I think we'll do and hopefully someone will emerge."