

Noah Smith
Director of Media Relations
Hockey East Association
Phone: (781) 245-2122
Fax: (781) 245-2492
nsmith@HockeyEastOnline.com

WOMEN'S LEAGUE

PRESS RELEASE



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FRIARS FAVORED IN SEASON NO. 2 *Defending champ Providence poised to repeat*

There was little secret to the success of the Providence College Friars in the first season of the Hockey East women's league – lots of depth and dedication. The Friars seemed to have a little more than any other team en route to both the regular season and tournament titles and may have a lot more this year – they are a unanimous pick to finish first in Hockey East once again according to the annual preseason coaches' poll.

Friar defenseman Kelli Halcisak led all Hockey East scorers last year with 21 points in league play and 45 points overall. She will pace the Friars at both ends once again but will have plenty of support in the names of forward Rush Zimmerman (20 goals, 20 assists) and goaltender Jana Bugden, who was 20-5-5 with a 1.69 GAA and .925 save percentage in her rookie season.

No. 2 selection UNH lost 10 players from last season's roster, none more important than senior goaltender Jen Huggon, whose nine shutouts, 0.89 GAA and .953 save percentage in league play set incredible opening standards for the record book. Huggon was the first-ever MVP of the women's league.

Maine was picked to finish fifth last year but edged out three other squads to finish in third. In a very close vote, the Black Bears edged out the same three in this year's poll, while BC, UConn and Northeastern finished 4-5-6, respectively. Boston College is the only team with a rookie head coach, as Tom Mutch has moved over from his assistant position with the Northeastern men's team. Clearly, the coaches are expecting another tough race for the final two playoff spots.

2003-04 Preseason Coaches' Poll

<u>Team (1st Place Votes)</u>	<u>Pts</u>
1. Providence (5)	25
2. New Hampshire (1)	21
3. Maine	14
4. Boston College	11
5. Connecticut	10
6. Northeastern	9