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## WOMEN'S LEAGUE

# PRESS RELEASE



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## WILDCATS, FRIARS AGAIN FAVORED *Boston College expected to be significantly improved*

The annual preseason coaches' poll yielded no surprise at the top, as UNH and Providence were nearly co-favorites to win the Hockey East regular season title.

Defending regular season champ UNH came away with the designation, garnering four first-place votes to the two received by Providence, but the Wildcats only out-pointed the Friars by a total of two points in the overall poll tally. Once again, the race between these two for the Hockey East title should be hotly contested all season long.

The big surprise, to some at least, was that Boston College is predicted to mightily rebound from successive last-place finishes in the first two seasons of Hockey East play. The Eagles, now in their second season under former U.S. Olympic assistant coach Tom Mutch, are predicted to finish third, which would give them their first-ever Hockey East playoff berth.

Maine and Northeastern are both welcoming new coaches to the fold, and have been chosen to finish fourth and sixth, respectively. Northeastern's selection is as much a reflection of the graduation of All-American goaltender Chanda Gunn as it is a reflection of the departure of their head coach. NU alum Laura Schuler ('94) is taking over the reins at her alma mater while former Black Bear men's assistant Guy Perron now takes over behind the Maine women's bench. The University of Connecticut, seeking a return to the Hockey East postseason, has been picked to finish fifth.

The Women's Hockey East Association is a six-team, Division-I college hockey conference based entirely in New England, with offices situated in Wakefield, Mass. Founded in 2001, the league will expand to eight teams at the start of the 2005-06 season, adding Boston University and the University of Vermont.

### 2004-05 Preseason Coaches' Poll

<u>Team (1st Place Votes)</u>	<u>Pts</u>
1. New Hampshire (4)	29
2. Providence (2)	27
3. Boston College	20
4. Maine	19
5. Connecticut	15
6. Northeastern	10

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