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# PRESS RELEASE

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## UNH WILDCATS FAVORED IN 08-09 WHEA PRESEASON POLL

**BOSTON** - Hockey East Commissioner Joe Bertagna announced the preseason women's coaches poll on Monday afternoon at the conference's annual media day held in Legends Restaurant at the TD Banknorth Garden in Boston.

The seventh season of WHEA regular-season play will begin on September 27, 2008 when Connecticut hosts Sacred Heart at Freitas Ice Forum, while conference play will commence on October 8, as Boston College travels to New Hampshire.

Three-time defending WHEA regular-season and tournament champion New Hampshire will once again be the favorite, according to the league's head coaches. The Wildcats return four of their top seven scorers, including First-Team All-Star Sam Faber and sophomore forward Jenn Wakefield, the 2008 WHEA Rookie of the Year. UNH returns only 12 letter winners from last season's Frozen Four run, losing 10 players from that same team. UNH enters the season with a 38-game (35-0-3) regular season unbeaten streak, which is a league record. The Wildcats have not lost a conference game since November of 2006 vs. Boston College.

The Eagles of Boston College will look to rebound from a tough 07-08 season, after making the program's first trip to the Frozen Four in March of 2007. Head Coach Katie King will rely heavily on junior forward Kelli Stack, along with seniors Meghan Fardelmann and Becky Zavisza. Junior netminder Molly Schaus will be the backbone of the Eagles team between the pipes.

Providence hopes to return to its dominant form that won them the WHEA Tournament in the first three years of the league's existence. Head Coach Bob Deraney and the Friars return four of the top six scorers from last year's roster. Goalie Danielle Ciarletta will once again carry a large workload in PC's net. She started 32 of 36 games for the Friars in her junior campaign.

Connecticut is fortunate to have Dominique Thibault, the reigning WHEA Player of the Year, for another two years in Storrs. The Huskies return 74% of their scoring from a year ago with six of their top seven point getters. Senior Brittany Wilson will return in goal and Amy Hollstein and Nicole Tritter will be asked to increase their roles in the offense with the graduation of Jaclyn Hawkins. Hawkins will now serve as an assistant coach on Heather Linstad's staff.

Head Coach Brian Durocher, the 2008 WHEA Coach of the Year, will attempt to guide the Boston University Terriers back to the league playoffs for the second straight year. BU had its best season in program history last season and qualified for the conference postseason for the first time since joining Hockey East.

The Vermont Catamounts should also have an improved season with a solid first year by goaltender Kristen Olychuck. Sarah Smiddy, Chelsea Furlani and Brittany Nelson will provide strong leadership for the upcoming season. Vermont returns 10 of its top 11 scorers from last seasons team that finished the season with two wins at Maine.

Northeastern first-year head coach Dave Flint has a solid offense in place along with goaltender Leah Sulyma between the pipes, who could become an All-Conference goalie before her time on Huntington Avenue is over. Sulyma tallied 973 saves in her freshman season, which marked the most stops by any WHEA goalie.

Maine will return 88% of its scorers from a season ago, along with goaltender Genevieve Turgeon, who kept the Black Bears in virtually every game last season. Turgeon was only one of three Hockey East netminders to record 900+ saves last season.

The regular season will determine the six teams that qualify for the Hockey East Championship Tournament. The league athletic directors voted to expand the tournament field to six teams at the annual conference meetings in Naples, Fla. in April of 2008. The third and fourth seeds in the tournament will host a quarterfinal round game on Saturday, February 28 or Sunday, March 1 on their respective campuses. The advancing teams will then be reseeded with the top two seeds to play on the site of the highest seed in the semifinal round on Saturday, March 7. The winners will qualify for the seventh annual Hockey East Championship Game on Sunday, March 8. The Women's Hockey East Association is an eight-team, Division-I college hockey conference which began play in 2002-2003, with offices based in Wakefield, Mass. The league also sponsors an 10 team men's league which began play in 1984-1985.

### 2008-09 HOCKEY EAST WHEA PRESEASON COACHES POLL

Rk.	Team (FPV)	Pts
1.	New Hampshire (4)	52
2.	Boston College (2)	47
3.	Providence (2)	43
4.	Connecticut	42
5.	Boston University	36
6.	Northeastern	23
	Vermont	23
8.	Maine	14

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