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PRESS RELEASE

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FOUR WHEA PLAYERS EARN SPOT ON 2010 U.S. WOMEN'S OLYMPIC TEAM **~All four athletes to compete in first Olympic Games in Vancouver, B.C.~**

WAKEFIELD, Mass. - Among the 21 players named to the 2010 U.S. Olympic Women's Ice Hockey Team on Thursday night at Mall of America in Bloomington, Minn. were four Women's Hockey East student-athletes (2 alumni, 2 current), including Providence forward Karen Thatcher (Douglas, Mass.), UNH blueliner Kacey Bellamy (Westfield, Mass.), along with current WHEA athletes, goaltender Molly Schaus (Natick, Mass.) and forward Kelli Stack (Brooklyn Heights, Ohio) from the Boston College Eagles.

In addition to the four players, Northeastern women's head coach Dave Flint will serve as an assistant coach for Mark Johnson's staff. Former Vermont assistant coach Emily McKissock will serve as the team's video coordinator throughout the games.

"It's an exciting day for a lot of reasons," said Mark Johnson, head coach for Team USA. "It was an extremely tough decision, but now we can move forward and continue preparing ourselves. We feel good about the process, which gave everyone an opportunity. We're excited by the youthfulness of our team, as well as comfortable with the veterans and the leadership they will provide."

A total of 17 players from Hockey East schools have competed in the Olympics, which now includes five that have competed in WHEA play. Northeastern's Chanda Gunn was the first WHEA graduate to play in Olympic Games (2006; Turin, Italy). New Hampshire and Providence are the two WHEA programs that have produced the most Olympians with eight and five, respectively.

The U.S. team, which includes three goaltenders, six defensemen and 12 forwards, will continue competing in the Qwest Tour until departing for the Olympics on Feb. 7. The opening ceremonies are slated for Feb. 12, with Team USA's first game taking place on Feb. 14 against China.

The U.S. Olympic Women's Ice Hockey Team has medaled in all three Olympic appearances to date (gold-1998, silver-2002, bronze-2006).

The team was selected from the 23 players who made up the 2009-10 U.S. Women's National Team. The group has been training in Blaine, Minn., at the National Sports Center's Schwan Super Rink since early September, in addition to competing on the Qwest Tour and in two international tournaments.

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.

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