



WCHA WEEKEND PREVIEW: FEB. 20-21, 2015

News and notes for the upcoming weekend of WCHA hockey

Opening Face-Off

- **Top Ten Lists:** The WCHA continues to have three teams in the top 10 of both the USCHO.com and *USA Today/USA Hockey Magazine* opinion polls, along with the PairWise rankings. Minnesota State leads the all-important PairWise, while sitting at No. 2/3 in the polls. Michigan Tech has risen to No. 4 in the polls and is seventh in the PairWise, while Bowling Green is holding steady at eighth in all three ledgers.
- **Winning Hockey:** Michigan Tech and Minnesota State are 1-2 in the country for wins this season, while MTU, MSU and BGSU give the WCHA an NCAA-best (tied) three of the nation's top 10 winning percentages. Minnesota State's .774 mark (23-6-2) is tops, Michigan Tech is second at .766 (24-7-1) and Bowling Green is seventh at .683 (18-7-5).
- **Turnaround Artists:** Not only does Michigan Tech have its most wins (24) since the 1980-81 campaign, the Huskies also boast the NCAA's largest year-to-year improvement with 10 more victories than in 2013-14 (14). Alabama Huntsville, which has won more games than the last three seasons combined, is tied for fourth with a +6 mark (8 wins, up from 2 a year ago). Boston University has won nine more games this season than last, while Penn State (+7) and Merrimack (+6) round out the group that has improved by at least a half-dozen victories.
- **Seeking Home Ice:** Minnesota State, Michigan Tech and Bowling Green have all clinched spots in the WCHA playoffs, while the Mavericks and Huskies (for the first time since 1992-93) have also secured home ice advantage. Bowling Green needs just one point this weekend (or a two-point-or-less weekend from Bemidji State) to wrap up home ice.
- **Playoff Positioning:** Meanwhile, five of the remaining six playoff-eligible teams can finish anywhere from home ice to last place.
- **Chasing Hobey:** Among the WCHA's seven Hobey Baker Award candidates, MSU's **Bryce Gervais** is tied for fourth nationally with 20 goals, MTU's **Tanner Kero** is tied for fourth with 40 points, MSU's **Matt Leitner** and Alaska's **Tyler Morley** are tied for 19th with 32 points and MTU's **Jamie Phillips** is in the top 10 for wins (1st - 23), winning percentage (5th - .783), GAA (5th - 1.76), save percentage (6th - .934) and shutouts (t-4th - 4).

The Week Ahead

- **Seeking Home Ice in Ohio...:** No. 8 Bowling Green hosts Northern Michigan this weekend needing just one point to secure home ice, while the Wildcats are looking to break a fourth-place tie with Bemidji State.
- **...and in Bemidji:** Bemidji State, which pulled into an edge for the final home ice slot after sweeping NMU last weekend (Beavers hold the tiebreaker over the Wildcats), hosts Alaska Anchorage at the Sanford Center.
- **Tussle in Alabama:** Alabama Huntsville, just three points behind Ferris State for sixth place among playoff-eligible teams, welcomes the Bulldogs to the Von Braun Center.

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- All six WCHA games this weekend, spanning three series, can be viewed live via WCHA.tv

WCHA

**Northern Michigan (8-10-4, 20 pts. / 11-13-6) at No. 8 Bowling Green (14-5-3, 31 pts. / 18-7-5)
BGSU Student Ice Arena; Bowling Green, Ohio**

Friday, Feb. 20 and Saturday, Feb. 21 (7:07 p.m. ET both nights) – WATCH LIVE ON [WCHA.TV](#)

- No. 8 Bowling Green hosts Northern Michigan this weekend needing just one point to secure home ice, while the Wildcats are looking to break a tie in the standings with Bemidji State. The Falcons hold the slight edge in the all-time series at 41-38-8.
- BGSU remains the nation's top penalty kill unit at 92.7 percent and sits fourth in combined special teams at 54.1 percent (132-of-244).
- Despite having the 15th-best offense in the nation, Bowling Green does not have a single player among the top 100-point scorers. However, three Falcons sit among the top 50 freshmen in the nation for the category, led by F **Brandon Hawkins** in 20th with 21 points.
- NMU junior F **Darren Nowick** and sophomore F **Dominik Shine** continue to lead the Wildcats with seven goals and 11 assists each. Sophomore D **Brock Maschmeyer** leads the squad in goals with eight.
- Bowling Green, which dropped an OT game last Saturday, will look to improve on its 5-0-1 mark after losses this season.

**Ferris State (9-13-0, 18 pts. / 12-18-1) at Alabama Huntsville (7-14-1, 15 pts. / 8-18-4)
Von Braun Center; Huntsville, Alabama**

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- Alabama Huntsville, just three points behind Ferris State for sixth place among playoff-eligible teams, welcomes the Bulldogs to the Von Braun Center for a weekend matchup.
- Freshman F **Max McHugh** leads the Chargers with 18 points (8g, 10a) and was recently named WCHA Rookie of the Week. His eight goals rank second among first-year players in the conference, while his 18 overall points place him fourth.
- Chargers' sophomore D **Brandon Carlson** remains tied atop the NCAA with 71 blocks this season. He headlines a defense that ranks fourth in the nation in blocks with 459 in the current campaign.
- FSU sophomore F **Jared VanWormer**, who factored in all four Bulldog goals last weekend, leads the team with four power-play markers.
- UAH sophomore G **Carmine Guerriero** owns a .929 save percentage this season, good for 14th nationally and third in the WCHA. On the opposing side, Bulldogs senior captain and goaltender **CJ Motte** is only three wins shy of matching former standout Mike Brown's school-best 63 victories in net.

**Alaska Anchorage (4-16-2, 10 pts. / 7-17-4) at Bemidji State (8-10-4, 20 pts. / 12-14-4)
Sanford Center; Bemidji, Minn.**

Friday, Feb. 20 (7:37 p.m. CT) and Saturday, Feb. 21 (7:07 p.m. CT) – WATCH LIVE ON [WCHA.TV](#)

- Bemidji State, which pulled into an edge for the final home ice slot after sweeping NMU last weekend (Beavers hold the tiebreaker over the Wildcats), hosts Alaska Anchorage at home.
- Freshman G **Michael Bitzer** has been solid in net for the Beavers. He leads all NCAA goalies with a 1.28 goals against average since Dec. 12, while going 8-4-2 in that span with a .947 save percentage (second nationally) and four shutouts (also second).
- BSU senior D **Matt Prapavessis** leads his squad with 20 points and 13 assists overall, while sophomore F **Charlie O'Connor** heads the scoring with 10 goals on the year.
- On top for the Seawolves, senior F **Scott Allen** has a team-high eight goals and 15 points. Sophomore D **Chase Van Allen** leads the UAA blueliners with 1-11—12 totals.
- The Beavers are 5-1-4 against the Seawolves in a series that got its start in 2010, with BSU going unbeaten in the last nine meetings.

IDLE

- No. 2 Minnesota State (19-3-2, 40 pts. / 23-6-2)
- No. 4 Michigan Tech (19-4-1, 39 pts. / 24-7-1)
- Alaska (10-12-2, 22 pts. / 15-13-2)
- Lake Superior State (6-17-1, 13 pts. / 7-23-2)

About Western Collegiate Hockey Association (WCHA)

The Western Collegiate Hockey Association, among the most historic, tradition-rich and successful conferences in all of collegiate athletics, proudly marks its 63rd season of men's competition in 2014-15. Covering five time zones and more than 4,200 miles, the 10-team Division 1 conference consists of the University of Alabama in Huntsville (Chargers), the University of Alaska Anchorage (Seawolves), the University of Alaska (Nanooks), Bemidji State University (Beavers), Bowling Green State University (Falcons), Ferris State University (Bulldogs), Lake Superior State University (Lakers), Michigan Technological University (Huskies), Minnesota State University (Mavericks) and Northern Michigan University (Wildcats).

MEDIA CONTACT

Matt Hodson
Associate Commissioner for Public Relations
E: mhodson@wcha.com
O: 952.818.8872
M: 612.801.2808

MORE INFORMATION

Website: wcha.com
Twitter: [@wcha_mhockey](https://twitter.com/wcha_mhockey)
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