



## WCHA WEEKEND PREVIEW: FEB. 27-28, 2015

### *News and notes for the upcoming weekend of WCHA hockey*

#### Opening Face-Off

- **Two of the Top Three:** Entering their showdown series this weekend in Mankato, No. 2 Minnesota State and No. 3 Michigan Tech give the WCHA two of the top three teams in country, according to both the USCHO.com and *USA Today/USA Hockey Magazine* opinion polls.
- **A Further Look at the Rankings:** No. 11 Bowling Green rounds out the WCHA presence in the polls, giving the league a quarter of the nation's top-12 schools. Minnesota State continues to lead the all-important PairWise rankings, while Michigan Tech is fifth and Bowling Green is 13th.
- **20/20:** This is the 24th season that the WCHA has employed a 28-game schedule. With 19 league wins apiece, Minnesota State and Michigan Tech are vying to become the 19th and 20th schools to reach the 20-win plateau during a league season of that length. The Mavericks, in fact, are attempting to join the 1997-98 and 1998-99 North Dakota teams as the only in WCHA history to post consecutive 20-win league seasons in a 28-game slate.
- **Playoff-Bound:** Minnesota State, Michigan Tech, Bowling Green, Bemidji State, Northern Michigan and Ferris State have all clinched berths in the 2015 WCHA playoffs. Both Alabama Huntsville and Lake Superior State could potentially punch their tickets this weekend, as all five WCHA series have potential playoff implications.
- **Seeking Home Ice:** MSU and MTU have clinched home ice. BGSU needs just one more win to wrap up a first round series at the BGSU Ice Arena.
- **Chasing Hobey:** Of the WCHA's seven Hobey Baker Award candidates, MSU's **Bryce Gervais** is tied for fifth nationally with 20 goals, MTU's **Tanner Kero** is tied for eighth with 40 points, and MTU's **Jamie Phillips** is in the top 10 for wins (1st - 23), winning percentage (4th - .783), GAA (6th - 1.76), save percentage (6th - .934) and shutouts (t-4th - 4).

#### The Week Ahead

- **The Quest for the Cup:** The premiere series in all of college hockey this weekend is at Mankato's Verizon Wireless Center, where No. 2 Minnesota State hosts No. 3 Michigan Tech. A sweep for the Mavericks allows them to hoist the MacNaughton Cup for the first time in school history, while a split or Huskies sweep sends the cup quest into the final weekend.
- **Home Ice Tussle:** Bemidji State, which has won four straight to vault into home ice position (holding the tiebreaker over Northern Michigan), visits Ferris State. The Bulldogs have won three straight and trail the Beavers and Northern Michigan by just two points for fourth place.
- **Cappo Cup:** Northern Michigan hosts Lake Superior State in Marquette, Mich. in the finale of the Cappo Cup series (the Wildcats own a 2-0 lead in the series).
- **Nanooks at Chargers:** Alabama Huntsville, which can clinch a playoff spot with three points this weekend, hosts Alaska.
- **Falcons at Seawolves:** No. 11 Bowling Green will look to clinch home ice, ironically, while making its farthest road trip, to Alaska Anchorage.

#### WCHA.tv

- All 10 WCHA games this weekend, spanning five series, can be viewed live via [WCHA.tv](http://WCHA.tv)

**WCHA**

**No. 3 Michigan Tech (19-4-1, 39 pts. / 24-7-1) at No. 2 Minnesota State (19-3-2, 40 pts. / 23-6-2)  
Verizon Wireless Center; Mankato, Minn.**

**Friday, Feb. 27 and Saturday, Feb. 28 (7:07 p.m. CT both nights) – WATCH LIVE ON [WCHA.TV](#)**

- The marquee matchup in all of college hockey this weekend takes place at the Verizon Wireless Center in Mankato, as No. 3 Michigan Tech visits No. 2 Minnesota State with the MacNaughton Cup on the line. The Huskies are 10-0-1 on the road in WCHA play.
- A Mavericks sweep allows them to hoist the MacNaughton Cup for the first time in school history. A Huskies sweep or series split sends the Cup quest into the season's final weekend.
- This series pits the nation's two-winningest teams, as Tech leads the country with 24 wins and the Mavs are second with 23. The Huskies have the nation's longest winning streak at eight games, a stretch during which they've outscored opponents 43-9.
- Additionally, 10 of the league's top 11 scorers will be on the ice this weekend, as will five of the league's seven Hobey Baker Award candidates (MSU's **Bryce Gervais**, **Jean-Paul Lafontaine** and **Matt Leitner**; MTU's **Tanner Kero** and **Jamie Phillips**), and its top two goaltenders by GAA (Phillips and MSU's **Stephon Williams**).
- Michigan Tech boasts the nation's No. 2-ranked offense (3.75 gpg) and defense (1.78 gpg). Minnesota State is fifth (3.61) and fourth (1.97), respectively.
- Minnesota State leads the all-time series 30-16-5. Back in November, the Mavericks swept Tech in Houghton by scores of 2-1 and 3-2.

**Bemidji State (10-10-4, 24 pts. / 14-14-4) at Ferris State (11-13-0, 22 pts. / 14-18-1)  
Ewigleben Ice Arena; Big Rapids, Mich.**

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- Streaking teams collide in the chase for home ice advantage when Bemidji State brings its four-game winning streak to Big Rapids for a series at Ferris State, winners of three in a row.
- BSU, FSU and Northern Michigan are the three teams vying for the final home ice slot in the WCHA playoffs. The Bulldogs are two points behind the Beavers and Wildcats.
- The two teams are meeting for the first time this year, after six games in 2013-14. Ferris State went 5-1-0 last year, including a two-game sweep in the first round of the WCHA playoffs. FSU is 10-5-0 all-time against BSU.
- **Michael Bitzer**, the first rookie goaltender at BSU to record 12 victories since Matt Clime in 2004-05, is 10-4-2 with a 1.31 GAA, .945 save percentage and four shutouts since Dec. 12.
- On the other side, senior captain **CJ Motte** is one win away from matching former All-America netminder Mike Brown's school record of 63 victories.

**Lake Superior State (6-17-1, 13 pts. / 7-23-2) at Northern Michigan (10-10-4, 24 pts. / 13-13-6)  
Berry Events Center; Marquette, Mich..**

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- Northern Michigan hosts Lake Superior State in the final two games of the annual Cappel Cup series. NMU swept the Lakers in October in Sault Ste. Marie.
- NMU enters the series tied with Bemidji State for the fourth and final home ice playoff spot, but is looking up at the Beavers by virtue of tie-breaker (BSU went 3-0-1 against the Wildcats).
- The Lakers currently lead UAA by three points for the eighth and final playoff spot, while trailing Alabama Huntsville by two points for seventh. LSSU can clinch a playoff berth this weekend with a variety of scenarios.
- Beginning with the Lakers' title in the Florida College Hockey Classic, freshman G **Gordon Defiel** has a .949 save percentage – good for second in the nation during that span.
- NMU junior F **Darren Nowick** leads the Wildcats with 20 points (7g, 13a), while sophomore D **Brock Maschmeyer** is tops with eight goals.

**No. 11 Bowling Green (14-7-3, 31 pts. / 18-9-5) at Alaska Anchorage (4-18-2, 10 pts. / 7-19-4)  
Berry Events Center; Marquette, Mich..**

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- No. 11 Bowling Green will look to snap a season-long three-game losing streak, and clinch the No. 3 seed for the WCHA playoffs, when it visits Alaska Anchorage. The Seawolves are in the throes of an eight-game losing skid.
- The Falcons will wrap up home ice with one win this weekend. Additionally, BGSU gets the No. 3 seed with a tie and three-point-or-less weekends from either BSU or NMU; or, a two-point-or-less weekend from the Beavers and Wildcats.
- BGSU leads the all-time series 4-1-1, with four of those six meetings coming this year. The Falcons and Seawolves have not played during the 2014-15 campaign.
- BGSU does not have a single player among the top-100 point scorers in the nation, despite having the country's 19<sup>th</sup>-best offense. Thirteen Falcons have scored at least 10 points (only three other schools have more).
- UAA freshman G **Olivier Mantha** has a .911 save percentage – the highest by a Seawolves netminder since Chris King (.921) in 2003-04.

**Alaska (10-12-2, 22 pts. / 15-13-2) at Alabama Huntsville (7-16-1, 15 pts. / 8-20-4)  
Von Braun Center; Huntsville, Ala.**

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- Alabama Huntsville will look to wrap up its first-ever WCHA playoff berth with a home series against Alaska. The Nanooks have been idle since going 1-0-1 against Minnesota State two weekends ago.
- The Chargers are in the playoffs with three-or-more points this weekend. UAH can also clinch with a variety of other scenarios, depending upon LSSU and UAA.
- Alaska is 17-4-1 all-time against Alabama Huntsville, including a pair of wins in Fairbanks last season. This will be the Nanooks' first trip to Huntsville since 1992.
- The Nanooks, which finished the season 2-1-1 against WCHA front-runners Minnesota State and Michigan Tech, will look to play the role of spoilers in their final two weekends.
- UAH rookie **Max McHugh** ranks 26<sup>th</sup> among all NCAA freshman with his team-high 19 points (8g, 11a).

***About the 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 63<sup>rd</sup> 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). For more information, visit [wcha.com](http://wcha.com).

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