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WCHA ANNOUNCES 2014-15 POSTSEASON AWARDS

Michigan Tech senior forward Tanner Kero named Player of the Year and Outstanding Student-Athlete of the Year; Huskies and Minnesota State lead with six All-WCHA selections apiece

EDINA, Minn. – March 12, 2015 – Led by six selections apiece for nationally second-ranked Minnesota State and No. 4 Michigan Tech, the league's top five regular season finishers paced the men's Western Collegiate Hockey Association (WCHA) postseason all-league teams and individual award winners, as announced today by Commissioner Bill Robertson.

Michigan Tech senior forward **Tanner Kero** capped a tremendous regular season by being named the WCHA Player of the Year and Outstanding Student-Athlete of the Year, complementing his status as the league's scoring champion. Alaska junior defenseman – and recent St. Louis Blues signee – **Colton Parayko** repeated as Defensive Player of the Year. Bemidji State freshman **Michael Bitzer** was tabbed Rookie of the Year, while Minnesota State's **Mike Hastings** earned Coach of the Year accolades.

WCHA Player of the Year and Outstanding Student-Athlete of the Year

Tanner Kero, Sr., F, Michigan Tech (Hancock, Mich.)

Kero has established himself as one of the premier players in college hockey during a dynamic senior campaign on the ice, while exemplifying the true nature of a student-athlete away from the rink. The senior from Hancock, Mich. captured the WCHA scoring crown with 13 goals, 21 assists and 34 points in 28 conference games. A Hobey Baker Award nominee and All-WCHA First Team selection, Kero enters the postseason tied for 10th in the country with 43 points overall (18 goals, 25 assists), while also ranking among NCAA leaders for plus/minus (tied for fifth at +22) and game-winning goals (tied for third with seven). In the classroom, Kero maintains a 3.72 GPA in mathematics with a concentration in actuarial sciences. He has been honored as a WCHA Scholar-Athlete and earned a spot on the All-Academic team in all three years in which he has been eligible. One of 10 finalists for the 2015 Senior CLASS Award, Kero also volunteers in the Koaches Kids reading program for elementary schools, local youth hockey programs and numerous local charity events in the Houghton, Mich. area.

WCHA Defensive Player of the Year

Colton Parayko, Jr., D, Alaska (St. Albert, Alberta)

Parayko earned his second consecutive Defensive Player of the Year honor after excelling on both ends of the ice. The junior from St. Albert, Alberta ranked third among WCHA defensemen with 20 points (4 goals, 16 assists) in 28 league contests, while tying for third among all league players with 13 power-play points. While finishing with 23 points overall, Parayko also helped anchor a Nanooks' defense that

ranked in the top 25 nationally – including yielding just 1.38 goals per game over a perfect 7-0-1 stretch to end the season. On Tuesday, March 10, the All-WCHA First Team defenseman signed a two-year entry level contract with St. Louis, after he was originally drafted by the Blues in the third round (86th overall) of the 2012 NHL Entry Draft.

WCHA Rookie of the Year

Michael Bitzer, Fr., G, Bemijdi State (Moorhead, Minn.)

Bitzer has been not just one of the best goaltenders in the WCHA, but one of the top netminders in the country during his rookie collegiate campaign. The freshman from Moorhead, Minn. led the WCHA with a .936 save percentage in conference play, while ranking second with a 1.61 goals against average. He ranks sixth nationally (third among freshman) with an overall .932 save percentage, while pacing all NCAA rookies with a 1.76 GAA (fourth overall). Beginning Dec. 12, Bitzer – who also earned a spot on the WCHA All-Rookie team – leads the country with a .948 save percentage and 1.31 GAA, while going 12-4-3 over his final 16 starts.

WCHA Coach of the Year

Mike Hastings, Minnesota State

Hastings was honored by his peers after guiding the Mavericks to the first MacNaughton Cup in program history and a No. 2 national ranking entering the postseason. During Hastings' third year at the helm, Minnesota State went 21-4-3 for 45 points in league play, posting a .804 winning percentage that is the third-best in WCHA history for a 28-game conference schedule. The Mavericks, who also ascended to the top of the opinion polls for the first time ever, enters the postseason tied for the nation's best overall winning percentage at .757 (25-7-3).

All-WCHA First Team

Kero is joined on the All-WCHA First Team forward line by Minnesota State senior **Matt Leitner** (Los Alamitos, Calif.) and Alaska junior **Tyler Morley** (Burnaby, British Columbia). Leitner, who is second among all active NCAA players with 111 career assists, led the WCHA with 25 helpers in conference play and finished third in the scoring race with 32 points (seven goals). Morley, who was a point shy of the WCHA scoring title, ranked second with 33 points and 14 goals (also 19 assists).

Parayko's defensive line mate is Minnesota State senior **Zach Palmquist** (South St. Paul, Minn.), who was second among league blue liners with 21 points (five goals, 16 assists) in 28 WCHA games.

The first team goaltender is Michigan Tech junior **Jamie Phillips** (Caledonia, Ontario). The Winnipeg Jets draft choice posted a 20-4-2 record in conference action, while ranking third with a 1.71 goals against average and second with a .935 save percentage. Phillips' four shutouts tied for the high-water mark in WCHA play.

All-WCHA Second Team

The All-WCHA Second Team forwards are: Minnesota State junior **Bryce Gervais** (Battleford, Saskatchewan) and Michigan Tech teammates **Alex Petan** (Jr. / Delta, British Columbia) and **Malcolm Gould** (Jr. / North Vancouver, British Columbia). Gervais was the WCHA's top goal-scorer with 20 in 28 games (including a league-best eight power-play markers). Petan (32 points on seven goals and 25 assists) and Gould (27 points on 17 goals and 10 assists) finished tied for third and fifth, respectively, in the league scoring race.

Bemidji State senior **Matt Prapavessis** (Oakville, Ontario) and Minnesota State sophomore **Casey Nelson** (Wisconsin Rapids, Wis.) are the second team defensemen. Prapavessis tied for the league lead among defensemen with seven goals (also 11 assists for 18 points overall), while Nelson led WCHA blue liners with 17 assists and 22 points in conference play (five goals).

Minnesota State junior **Stephon Williams** (Fairbanks, Alaska), the WCHA goaltending champion with a 1.55 goals against average in league play, is the second team netminder. Williams also tied for the conference lead with four shutouts, while ranking third with a .929 save percentage.

All-WCHA Third Team

A tie in the voting places four forwards on the All-WCHA Third Team: Michigan Tech senior **Blake Pietila** (Brighton, Mich.), Alaska sophomore **Marcus Basara** (Port Moody, British Columbia), Bemidji State sophomore **Brendan Harms** (Steinbach, Manitoba) and Alaska Anchorage junior **Blake Tatchell** (North Battleford, Saskatchewan). Pietila tallied 21 points in WCHA games (10 goals, 11 assists), Basara had 22 (11-11), Harms finished with 14 (7-7) and Tatchell logged 18 (6-12).

The All-WCHA Third Team defensemen are: Michigan Tech sophomore **Shane Hanna** (Salmon Arm, British Columbia) and Northern Michigan sophomore **Brock Maschmeyer** (Bruederheim, Alberta). Hanna led all WCHA players with a +24 plus/minus rating during conference games and logged 14 points (five goals, nine assists), while Maschmeyer tied for the league lead with seven goals from his blue line position (also nine assists for 16 points).

Ferris State senior **CJ Motte** (St. Clair, Mich.) is the third team goaltender after tying for the WCHA lead with four shutouts. The Bulldogs' captain, also a Hobey Baker Award nominee and a finalist for the Senior CLASS Award, posted a 2.05 goals against average and .921 save percentage.

WCHA All-Rookie Team

The freshman forward line on the All-Rookie team is: Bowling Green's **Brandon Hawkins** (Macomb, Mich.), Minnesota State's **C.J. Franklin** (Forest Lake, Minn.) and Alabama Huntsville's **Max McHugh** (Seattle, Wash.). The trio also finished 1-3 in the league rookie scoring race, as Hawkins led the way with 12 goals and 24 points (also 12 assists), Franklin (a Winnipeg Jets draft pick) was second with 20 points (four goals and freshman-best 16 assists) and McHugh was third with 19 points (10 goals, nine assists).

A pair of Bowling Green teammates forms the All-Rookie blue line, with **Mark Friedman** (Toronto, Ontario) joining **Nolan Valleau** (Novi, Mich.). Friedman, a Philadelphia Flyers draft choice, logged all 15 of his rookie points by way of assists. Valleau tallied 11 points (two goals, nine assists).

Bitzer was tabbed as the All-Rookie Team goaltender.

About the 2014-15 WCHA Awards

Conference member team head coaches vote for the WCHA individual award winners and all-league selections, while the WCHA Outstanding Student-Athlete of the Year is selected by the institutional faculty representatives. Points for awards and all-league teams are awarded on a five-point (First Team vote), three-point (Second Team vote), and one-point (Third Team vote) basis.

2014-15 WCHA INDIVIDUAL AWARDS

- Player of the Year – Tanner Kero, Sr., F, Michigan Tech (Hancock, Mich.)
- Outstanding Student-Athlete of the Year – Tanner Kero, Sr., F, Michigan Tech (Hancock, Mich.)
- Defensive Player of the Year – Colton Parayko, Jr., D, Alaska (St. Albert, Alberta)
- Rookie of the Year – Michael Bitzer, Fr., G, Bemidji State (Moorhead, Minn.)
- Scoring Champion – Tanner Kero, Sr., F, Michigan Tech (Hancock, Mich.)
- Goaltending Champion – Stephon Williams, Jr., G, Minnesota State (Fairbanks, Alaska)
- Coach of the Year – Mike Hastings, Minnesota State

2014-15 ALL-WCHA TEAMS

FIRST TEAM

PLAYER (YEAR / HOMETOWN)	POSITION	SCHOOL
Tanner Kero (Sr. / Hancock, Mich.)	Forward	Michigan Technological University
Matt Leitner (Sr. / Los Alamitos, Calif.)	Forward	Minnesota State University
Tyler Morley (Jr. / Burnaby, British Columbia)	Forward	University of Alaska
Colton Parayko (Jr. / St. Albert, Alberta)	Defenseman	University of Alaska
Zach Palmquist (Sr. / South St. Paul, Minn.)	Defenseman	Minnesota State University
Jamie Phillips (Jr. / Caledonia, Ontario)	Goaltender	Michigan Technological University

SECOND TEAM

PLAYER (YEAR / HOMETOWN)	POSITION	SCHOOL
Bryce Gervais (Jr. / Battleford, Saskatchewan)	Forward	Minnesota State University
Alex Petan (Jr. / Delta, British Columbia)	Forward	Michigan Technological University
Malcolm Gould (Jr. / North Vancouver, British Columbia)	Forward	Michigan Technological University
Matt Prapavassis (Sr. / Oakville, Ontario)	Defenseman	Bemidji State University
Casey Nelson (Soph. / Wisconsin Rapids, Wis.)	Defenseman	Minnesota State University
Stephon Williams (Jr. / Fairbanks, Alaska)	Goaltender	Minnesota State University

THIRD TEAM

PLAYER (YEAR / HOMETOWN)	POSITION	SCHOOL
Blake Pietila (Sr. / Brighton, Mich.)	Forward	Michigan Technological University
Marcus Basara (Soph. / Port Moody, British Columbia)	Forward	University of Alaska
Brendan Harms (Soph. / Steinbach, Manitoba)	Forward	Bemidji State University
Blake Tatchell (Jr. / North Battleford, Saskatchewan)	Forward	University of Alaska Anchorage
Shane Hanna (Soph. / Salmon Arm, British Columbia)	Defenseman	Michigan Technological University
Brock Maschmeyer (Soph. / Bruederheim, Alberta)	Defenseman	Northern Michigan University
CJ Motte (Sr. / St. Clair, Mich.)	Goaltender	Ferris State University

ALL-ROOKIE TEAM

PLAYER (YEAR / HOMETOWN)	POSITION	SCHOOL
Brandon Hawkins (Fr. / Macomb, Mich.)	Forward	Bowling Green State University
C.J. Franklin (Fr. / Forest Lake, Minn.)	Forward	Minnesota State University
Max McHugh (Fr. / Seattle, Wash.)	Forward	University of Alabama in Huntsville
Mark Friedman (Fr. / Toronto, Ontario)	Defenseman	Bowling Green State University
Nolan Valleau (Fr. / Novi, Mich.)	Defenseman	Bowling Green State University
Michael Bitzer (Fr. / Moorhead, Minn.)	Goaltender	Bemidji State University

All-Academic Team

The conference also released the 2014-15 All-WCHA Academic Team, comprised of 132 student-athletes representing all 10 WCHA men's-member institutions. In order to qualify, a student-athlete must have completed at least one year of residency at his present institution prior to the current academic year, have a grade point average of at least 3.00 (4.00 scale) for the previous two semesters or three quarters, or may qualify if overall GPA is at least 3.00 for all terms at the present institution.

Following, by team, are the one hundred thirty-two (132) 2014-15 WCHA All-Academic Team honorees:

University of Alabama in Huntsville

Chad Brears (Jr., F, Cold Lake, Alberta); Brandon Carlson (So., D, Huntington Beach, Calif.); Alex Carpenter (Jr., F, Portage, Mich.); Brent Fletcher (So., F, New Westminster, British Columbia); Matt Larose (So., G, Nanaimo, British Columbia); Frank Misuraca (Jr., D, Clinton Township, Mich.); Craig Pierce (Sr., F, Roswell, Ga.); Jack Prince (Jr., F, Leicester, England); Doug Reid (Sr., F, Innisfil, Ontario); Ben Reinhardt (Sr., D, Arnprior, Ontario); Regan Soquila (So., F, Maple Ridge, British Columbia); Jeff Vanderlugt (Sr., F, Richmond Hill, Ontario); Anderson White (Jr., D, Caledon, Ontario)

University of Alaska Anchorage

Scott Allen (Sr., F, Edmonton, Alberta); Austin Coldwell (Sr., D, Vancouver, Wash.); Tanner Dusyk (So., F, Montmarte, Saskatchewan); Blake Leask (Jr., D, Edmonton, Alberta); Michael Matyas (So., G, Calgary, Alberta); Zack Russell (So., F, Calgary, Alberta); Austin Sevalrud (Jr., D, Calgary, Alberta); Blake Tatchell (Jr., F, North Battleford, Saskatchewan)

University of Alaska

Josh Atkinson (Jr., D, Spruce Grove, Alberta); Marcus Basara (So., F, Port Moody, British Columbia); Sean Cahill (Sr., G, Calgary, Alberta); Trevor Campbell (Sr., D, Kansas City, Mo.); Josh Erickson (So., F, Roseau, Minn.); Matt Friese (Jr., F, Wasilla, Alaska); Alec Hajdukovich (Jr., F, Fairbanks, Alaska); Shawn Hochhausen (So., F, Kelowna, British Columbia); Nolan Huysmans (Jr., F, Alberta); Nolan Kaiser (Sr., D, Calgary, Alberta); John Keeney (Jr., G, Twin Peaks, Calif.); Jared Larson (RS-Sr., F, Apple Valley, Minn.); Brandon Morley (So, F, Burnaby, British Columbia); Tyler Morley (Jr., F, Burnaby, British Columbia); Colton Parayko (Jr., D, St. Albert, Alberta); Garrick Perry (Sr., F, Apple Valley, Minn.); J.D. Peterson (Jr., D, Orange, Calif.); Justin Tateson (Sr., D, Scandia, Alberta); Nolan Youngmun (Sr., F, Anchorage, Alaska)

Bemidji State University

Nate Arentz (So., F, Lakeville, Minn.); Phil Brewer (Sr., F, Cambridge, Ontario); Mitch Cain (Sr., F, Fort Frances, Ontario); Markus Gerbrandt (Jr., F, Edmonton, Alberta); Brendan Harms (So., F, Steinbach, Manitoba); Graeme McCormack (Jr., D, Thunder Bay, Ontario); Reid Mimmack (So., G, Brainerd, Minn.); Charlie O'Connor (So., F, Elk Grove Village, Ill.); Ruslan Pedan (So., D, Moscow, Russia); Matt Prapavessis (Sr., D, Oakville, Ontario); Sam Rendle (Sr., D, Grand Rapids, Minn.); Carter Struthers (So., D, Weyburn, Saskatchewan); Andrew Walsh (Sr., G, Dawson Creek, British Columbia); Jesse Wilkins (So., G, Calgary, Alberta); Sam Windle (Sr., D, Maple Grove, Minn.)

Bowling Green State University

Tommy Burke (Jr., G, Chaska, Minn.); Mark Cooper (Jr., F, Toronto, Ontario); Dan DeSalvo (Sr., F, Rolling Meadows, Ill.); Jose Delgadillo (Jr., D, Milwaukee, Wis.); Kevin Dufour Québec City, Québec); Rusty Hafner (Sr., D, Toledo, Ohio); Connor Kucera (Sr., D, Twin Lakes, Ind.); Ted Pletsch (Sr., F, Canton, Mich.); Matt Pohlkamp (So., F, Baxter, Minn.); Tomas Sholl (So., G, Hermosa Beach, Calif.); Mike Sullivan (Sr., D, Toronto, Ontario)

Ferris State University

Brandon Anselmini (Jr., D, Guelph, Ontario); Kenny Babinski (Jr., F, Midland, Mich.); Jason Binkley (Sr., D, Powell, Ohio); Justin Buzzeo (Sr., F, Windsor, Ontario); Simon Denis (Jr., D, Burnaby, British Columbia); Zach Dorer (Jr., D, Holt, Mich.); Ryan Lowney (So., D, Redford, Mich.); Chad McDonald (So., F, Battle Creek, Mich.); Ruben Medrano (Sr., G, Holt, Mich.); CJ Motte (Sr., G, St. Clair, Mich.); Sean O'Rourke (Jr., D, Alta Loma, Calif.); Trace Pennock (So., G, Big Rapids, Mich.); Matt Robertson (Jr., F, Rohnert Park, Calif.); Kyle Schempp (So., F, Saginaw, Mich.); Jared VanWormer (So., F, Traverse City, Mich.); Travis White (Sr., D, Sterling Heights, Mich.); Charles Williams (Jr., G, Canton, Mich.)

Lake Superior State University

Jayson Angus (So., F, Latrobe, Pa.); Chris Ciotti (Sr., F, Oxford, Mich.); Garrett Clement (So., F, Wausau, Wis.); Gus Correale (So., F, Prince George, B.C.); Aaron Davis (So., G, Mound, Minn.); Eric Drapluk (Jr., D, Pembroke Pines, Fla.); Alex Globke (So., F, Waterford, Mich.); Zach Loesch (Jr., D, White Bear Lake, Minn.); Austin McKay (Jr., F, Toronto, Ontario); Peter Megariotis (So., G, Anaheim, Calif.); Bryce Schmitt (Jr., F, Minot, N.D.); Peter Spratte (Jr., D, Rochester, Minn.); Daniel Vernace (Jr., F, Toronto, Ontario)

Michigan Technological University

Patrick Anderson (So., F, Bismark, N.D.); Brent Baltus (So., F, Nanaimo, British Columbia); CJ Eick (Jr., F, Appleton, Wis.); Blake Hietala (Sr., F, Houghton, Mich.); Tanner Kero (Sr., F, Hancock, Mich.); Chris Leibinger (So., D, Saginaw, Mich.); Alex Petan (Jr., F, Delta, British Columbia); Jamie Phillips (Jr., G, Caledonia, Ontario); Blake Pietila (Sr., F, Brighton, Mich.); Reid Sturos (So., F, Brighton, Mich.); Cliff Watson (So., D, Appleton, Wis.)

Minnesota State University

Teddy Blueger (Jr., F, Riga, Latvia); Nick Buchanan (Jr., D, Victoria, British Columbia); Sean Flanagan (So., D, Kindersley, Saskatchewan); Max Gaede (Sr., F, Woodbury, Minn.); Chase Grant (Sr., F, Oklahoma City, Okla.); Cole Huggins (So., G, Centennial, Ohio); Michael Huntebrinker (So., F, Chesterfield, Mo.); Jon Jutzi (Jr., D, Tavistock, Ontario); Dylan Margonari (Jr., F, Greensburg, Pa.); Casey Nelson (So., D, Wisconsin Rapids, Wis.); Jordan Nelson (So., F, Williston, N.D.); Zach Palmquist (Sr., D, South St. Paul, Minn.); Zach Stepan (So., F, Hastings, Minn.); Brett Stern (Sr., D, Lino Lakes, Minn.); Stephon Williams (Jr., G, Fairbanks, Alaska)

Northern Michigan University

Cohen Adair (Jr., F, Stratford, Ontario); Jake Baker (Sr., D, Port Moody, British Columbia); Aaron Beutenmiller (Jr., G, Tecumseh, Mich.); Derek Dun (So., G, Surrey, British Columbia); Ryan Kesti (Sr., F, Red Wing, Minn.); Aaron Leach (Jr., F, Marquette, Mich.); Brock Maschmeyer (So., D, Bruederheim, Alberta); Darren Nowick (Jr., F, Long Beach, Calif.); Sami Salminen (So., F, Helsinki, Finland); Ryan Trenz (Jr., D, St. Louis, Mo.)

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). For more information, visit wcha.com.

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