



WCHA WEEKEND PREVIEW: OCT. 10-11, 2015

News and notes for the upcoming weekend of WCHA hockey

Opening Face-Off

- **Tradition Starts Here:** The men's Western Collegiate Hockey Association (WCHA), among the most historic, tradition-rich and successful conferences in college hockey, drops the puck on its 64th season this weekend. Nine of the league's teams open their regular season schedules, while the 10th hosts an exhibition contest.
- **Polling Place:** No. 6 Minnesota State, No. 15 Michigan Tech and No. 16 Bowling Green give the WCHA a trio of teams in the preseason USCHO.com poll, while the Mavericks (No. 9) and Huskies (No. 15) are also ranked in the *USA Today/USA Hockey Magazine* poll (the Falcons have the most votes of any team outside the top-15).
- **Preseason Accolades:** MTU senior forward **Alex Petan** (4th among D-I active players with 102 career points) and UAH junior goaltender **Carmine Guerriero** (.927 save pct. while facing most shots per minute in the country last year) were both named to the College Hockey News Preseason All-America Second Team. MSU's **Bryce Gervais** (2nd in the nation with 27 goals in 2014-15) and UAF's **Tyler Morley** (8th among active players with 92 career points) were named among USCHO.com's "Top 10 Forwards to Watch." That same outlet also pegged 2015 WCHA Rookie of the Year **Michael Bitzer** (BSU) and Winnipeg Jets draftee **Jamie Phillips** (MTU) to its goalie watch list.
- **More of the Same?:** Minnesota State (1st at .762), Michigan Tech (No. 3 at .732) and Bowling Green (No. 7 at .654) gave the WCHA an NCAA-best three of the nation's top 10 winning percentages last year. Bemidji State closed the 2014-15 campaign on a 13-7-5 run, while Alaska went 7-0-1 in its final eight contests.
- **Experience Counts:** Minnesota State (107), Bowling Green (103) and Michigan Tech (99) rank second, fourth and fifth nationally, respectively, for most returning goals. Ferris State is 10th with 80.4% of its points back in a Bulldog uniform.

The Week Ahead

- **Nonconference Tests:** After improving its nonconference winning percentage by 102 points last year, the WCHA opens 2015-16 with 18 games against the NCHC (9), Big Ten (5), Hockey East (2) and, for the first time, D-I independent Arizona State (2).
- **Tournament Time:** Alaska Anchorage hosts the 25th anniversary addition of the Kendall Hockey Classic, while formally welcoming Arizona State to D-I hockey. Alaska and No. 17 St. Cloud State round out the field. Lake Superior State travels to Portland, Maine for the Ice Breaker Tournament, where the Lakers will skate against No. 4 North Dakota and Michigan State.
- **Ranked Mavericks Tussle:** Two teams in the top 10 of the USCHO.com poll, No. 6/9 Minnesota State and No. 10/11 Omaha, face off at the Verizon Wireless Center in a Mavericks vs. Mavericks series.

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- A total of 13 WCHA games this weekend can be viewed live via WCHA.tv.

NONCONFERENCE

**No. 10/11 Omaha (NCHC) at No. 6/9 Minnesota State
Verizon Wireless Center; Mankato, Minn.
Friday, October 9th and Saturday, October 10th (7:07 p.m. CT both nights)**

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- College hockey's only opening-weekend matchup of two top-10 teams takes place in Mankato, Minn. as No. 6/9 Minnesota State faces No. 10/11 Omaha.
- Minnesota State is beginning its 20th Division I season after a banner 2014-15 campaign that saw the Mavericks win its first-ever MacNaughton Cup, repeat as Broadmoor Trophy champions, finish the regular season atop the national PairWise rankings and post the country's best overall winning percentage at .762 (29-8-3).
- Senior F **Bryce Gervais**, who ranked second nationally last year with 27 goals (20 in WCHA) play, was named a "Top 10 Forward to Watch" by USCHO.com.
- The Mavericks, who also welcome back top-scoring defenseman **Casey Nelson** (7g-26a--33pts), return 107 goals from last year – a total that is good for second in the country.
- Four Mavericks have been selected by NHL teams in the annual draft: **Zach Stepan** (Nashville, 4th round in 2012), **Teddy Blueger** (Pittsburgh, 2nd round in 2012), **C.J. Franklin** (Winnipeg, 5th round in 2014) and transfer **Jimmy Mullin** (Tampa Bay, 4th round in 2010).

**Alaska Anchorage vs. Arizona State (Ind.) and St. Cloud State (NCHC)
Kendall Hockey Classic – Sullivan Arena; Anchorage, Alaska
Friday, October 9th at 8:07 p.m. AT and Saturday, October 10th at 7:07 p.m. AT**

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- Alaska Anchorage hosts the 25th anniversary edition of the Kendall Hockey Classic in the newly renovated Sullivan Arena. This year's Classic features the D-I debut of Arizona State along with St. Cloud State.
- Senior forward **Blake Tatchell**, one of the top playmakers in the conference, returns after earning Third Team All-WCHA honors last year (7g-15a--22pts). Tatchell has 79 points in 108 career games in a Seawolf uniform.
- Netminder **Olivier Mantha** returns for his sophomore season after claiming Team MVP honors last season. Mantha had a .914 save pct. and a 2.90 GAA as a rookie.
- UAA looks to reclaim the Kendall title this season after UAF took home the trophy last year. In the 24 years of the Classic, UAA has a 26-14-10 record and has made the championship 14 times.

**Alaska vs. St. Cloud State (NCHC) and Arizona State (Ind.)
Kendall Hockey Classic – Sullivan Arena; Anchorage, Alaska
Friday, October 9th at 5:07 p.m. AT and Saturday, October 10th at 4:07 p.m. AT**

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- The Nanooks, who are receiving votes in the USCHO.com preseason poll, start their 36th season of NCAA hockey by traveling to the Kendall Hockey Classic in Anchorage.
- WCHA coaches tabbed UAF senior center **Tyler Morley** as the league's Preseason Player of the Year. Morley finished second last year in the WCHA scoring race with 33 points (14g-19a).
- Morley, a USCHO.com "Top 10 Forward to Watch," is eight points shy of the career 100-point club.
- UAF brings back 17 skaters from last year's team. The team's top two scorers in Morley and **Marcus Basara** (11g-11a--22pts.) will return for another season in a Nanooks jersey.
- Assistant captain **Alec Hajdukovich** is the first Fairbanks native to wear a captain's letter on his jersey under head coach **Dallas Ferguson**.

Alabama Huntsville vs. Connecticut (HEA)
Von Braun Center; Huntsville, Ala.
Friday, October 9th and Saturday, October 10th (7:07 p.m. CT both nights)

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- Alabama Huntsville opens the 2015-16 campaign with a nonconference home series against Hockey East opponent Connecticut (10-19-7 in 2014-15).
- The Chargers are led by junior G **Carmine Guerriero**, a second team CHN Preseason All-American. Guerriero posted a .928 last season while facing the most shots per minute in the country and is on the 2015-16 Mike Richter Award Watch List.
- Sophomore F **Max McHugh** returns to the ice after an explosive first season with the Chargers. McHugh finished his first collegiate season with 12 goals and 11 assists for 23 points – tied for third among WCHA freshmen and 25th nationally.
- Last season, UAH had seven players with double-digit points. Six of those seven skaters return for another season of Charger hockey, including McHugh, **Chad Brears** (3g-12a—15pts) and **Jack Prince** (5g-9a—14pts).
- Head Coach **Mike Corbett** brings in 10 fresh faces this season. Among the rookies is freshman forward **Jetlan Houcher**, who posted 71 points (39g, 32a) in 60 regular season games last season with the Fort McMurray Oil Barons (AJHL).

Bemidji State vs. No.2/3 Minnesota (NCHC)
AMSOIL Arena; Duluth, Minn. and Sanford Center; Bemidji, Minn.
Friday, October 9th at 7:07 p.m. CT and Saturday, October 10th at 7:07 p.m. CT

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- Bemidji State, which received votes in the USCHO.com preseason poll, opens its 60th season of hockey with a home-and-home series against the No. 2/3 Minnesota Duluth Bulldogs.
- BSU has won the last two meetings and is 9-7-1 against the Bulldogs since Oct. 7, 2005.
- The Beavers ended last season on a fantastic run, going 13-7-5 in its final 22 games and 9-2-2 after Jan. 23 (including four wins over top-10 teams).
- 2014-15 WCHA Rookie of the Year netminder **Michael Bitzer** returns to the Beavers after an incredible freshman season in goal that included a 1.80 GAA – the eighth-best mark in WCHA history. He was named to the 2015-16 Mike Richter Award Watch List.
- All-WCHA Third Team F **Brendan Harms** also returns, as does senior captain **Graeme McCormack**. **John Parker** and **Markus Gerbrandt** will wear an 'A' on their sweaters.

No. 16 Bowling Green vs. Ohio State (Big Ten)
Value City Arena; Columbus, Ohio and BGSU Ice Arena; Bowling Green, Ohio
Friday, October 9th at 7:00 p.m. ET and Saturday, October 10th at 7:37 p.m. ET

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- No. 16 Bowling Green opens the season with a home-and-home series with intrastate rival Ohio State.
- BGSU owns a 91-61-8 advantage in the all-time series, while the two teams have split four games over the past two seasons.
- The Falcons are coming off a 23-11-15 campaign, the most wins by Bowling Green since winning 26 games in the 1995-96 season.
- Sophomores **Brandon Hawkins** (3rd among D-I freshmen with 0.41 goals per game last season) and **Mark Friedman** (Philadelphia Flyers' draftee) return after earning WCHA All-Rookie team status last year.
- Senior G **Tommy Burke**, who posted a school-record 2.18 GAA last season, was named to the 2015-16 Mike Richter Award Watch List.
- Media covering the WCHA named freshman F **Stephen Baylis** as their choice for Preseason Newcomer of the Year. Baylis won the CCHL MVP award last season for his play with the Carleton Place Canadians.

Ferris State (0-0-0, 0 pts. WCHA / 0-0-0) vs. Western Michigan (0-0-0-0, 0 pts. NCHC / 0-0-0)

Lawson Ice Arena; Kalamazoo, Mich. and Ewigleben Ice Arena; Big Rapids, Mich.

Friday, October 9th at 7:00 p.m. ET and Saturday, October 10th at 7:07 p.m. ET

WATCH SATURDAY LIVE ON WCHA.TV

- Ferris State, which is receiving votes in the USCHO.com preseason poll, embarks on its 41st season – and 24th under two-time National Coach of the Year **Bob Daniels** – with a home-and-home series against former CCHA rival Western Michigan.
- FSU trails the all-time series, 51-74-13, but holds a 30-28-7 advantage over WMU when playing at home.
- The Bulldogs lost 5 skaters from last season's team but return eight of their top nine scorers from last year. In fact, FSU ranks 10th in the country with 80.4% of their offense returning for another year in a Bulldogs uniform.
- Junior forward **Kyle Schempp** will wear the 'C' for the Bulldogs this season while senior defenseman **Simon Denis** and **Sean O'Rourke** will wear the 'A' with junior forward **Jared VanWormer**.
- In the past four seasons, the Bulldogs have won two conference championships, made two NCAA tournament appearances and appeared in the NCAA Frozen Four national title game. Also, FSU has advanced to the WCHA Final Five each of the last two seasons.

Lake Superior State vs. No. 4 North Dakota (NCHC) and Michigan State (Big Ten)

Ice Breaker Tournament – Cross Insurance Arena; Portland, Maine

Friday, October 9th and Saturday, October 10th (4:30 p.m. ET both nights)

- Lake Superior State gets its 50th season of hockey underway with its first-ever trip to the prestigious Ice Breaker Tournament (now in its 19th season).
- The Ice Breaker field, which also contains No. 4 North Dakota, Michigan State and host Maine, has combined to win 15 national championships and make 47 Frozen Four appearances.
- Lakers head coach **Damon Whitten** made his collegiate playing debut at the inaugural Ice Breaker Tournament in 1997, helping Michigan Tech to the title.
- LSSU returns four of its top five scorers from 2014-15, including senior assistant captains **Bryce Schmitt** (7g-8a--15pts) and **Eric Drapluk** (3g-8a--11pts).
- The Lakers also welcome back sophomore G **Gordon Defiel**, who posted four shutouts and led the nation in saves last season with 1,148.

Northern Michigan at Wisconsin (Big Ten)

Kohl Center; Madison, Wisc.

Friday, October 9th and Saturday, October 10th (7:00 p.m. CT both nights)

- Northern Michigan opens its 2015-16 campaign with a two-game road series at Big Ten opponent Wisconsin.
- In the Wildcats' season-opening sweep of the then-No. 18 Badgers last season, **Mathias Dahlström** posted a shutout and turned aside 42-of-43 shots overall. NMU has won seven of the past 10 meetings overall.
- **Brock Maschmeyer**, who tied for the WCHA lead among defensemen with nine goals last season, is part of a NMU junior class that combined to score 41 of the team's 86 goals.
- In fact, four of the team's top five scorers last season are back as part of the class of 2017, including **Shane Sooth** (6g-15a--21pts), **Dominik Shine** (7g-13a--20pts) and **Gerard Hanson** (5g-14a--19pts).
- Newcomer **Troy Loggins** was named the 2015 USHL Playoff MVP after totaling a league-high 16 points (10g-6a) in 12 games to lead the Sioux Falls Stampede to a Clark Cup championship.

EXHIBITION

Laurentian at No. 15 Michigan Tech - EXHIBITION
John MacInnes Student Ice Arena; Houghton, Mich.
Friday, October 9th and Saturday, October 10th (7:07 p.m. ET both nights)

WATCH LIVE ON WCHA.TV

- Michigan Tech opens its 95th season of hockey this weekend when it hosts Laurentian in a pair of exhibition contests.
- The Huskies check in at No. 15 in both of the major national polls. Tech was ranked for the final 21 weeks of 2014-15 in both polls and climbed all the way to No. 1 after starting 10-0-0.
- Michigan Tech gets back the fifth-most goals (99) and third-most points (266) in all of college hockey. Last season, the Huskies ranked fifth in the nation in goals-per-game (3.51) and sixth in points-per-game (9.49).
- Senior captain **Alex Petan**, who is fourth among active D-I players with 102 career points, was named a second team Preseason All-American by College Hockey News.
- Senior G **Jamie Phillips** was named a USCHO. "Top 10 Goaltender to Watch" and to the Mike Richter Award Watch List after posting a 1.74 GAA (5th-best in WCHA history) and .933 save pct. (3rd in league annals) last year.

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, will proudly mark its 64th season of men's competition in 2015-16. 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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