

## Western Collegiate Hockey Association

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### Home of a Record 37 Men's National Championship

#### Teams Since 1951

1952, 1953, 1955, 1956, 1957, 1958,  
1959, 1960, 1961, 1962, 1963, 1964,  
1965, 1966, 1968, 1969, 1973, 1974,  
1975, 1976, 1977, 1979, 1980, 1981,  
1982, 1983, 1987, 1990, 1991, 1997,  
2000, 2002, 2003, 2004, 2005, 2006,  
2011

#### Men's Conference Members

University of Alaska Anchorage

Bemidji State University

Colorado College

University of Denver

Michigan Technological University

University of Minnesota

University of Minnesota Duluth

Minnesota State University

University of Nebraska Omaha

University of North Dakota

St. Cloud State University

University of Wisconsin

#### 2012 Red Baron™

#### WCHA Final Five

March 15-17

Xcel Energy Center Saint Paul, MN

[wcha.com](http://wcha.com)



July 20, 2011/For Release at 4:00 pm CT

## Northern Michigan to Rejoin WCHA Family

### Addition of Wildcats for 2013-14 Will Boost League Membership to Six Teams

SAINT PAUL, Minn. – The Western Collegiate Hockey Association (WCHA) is extremely pleased to announce today (July 20, 2011) that former conference member Northern Michigan University will be re-joining the Association family effective with the 2013-14 season. The NMU Wildcats were unanimously approved for membership in a conference call of league members held earlier today.

The Wildcats, who won the Division 1 men's national championship in 1991 while a member of the WCHA, were admitted into the Association as an eighth league member for the 1984-85 season and remained through the 1996-97 campaign when they left for the Central Collegiate Hockey Association (CCHA).

"We couldn't be more excited about welcoming back Northern Michigan University to the Western Collegiate Hockey Association family," said Commissioner Bruce M. McLeod. "We were naturally disappointed when the Wildcats left the WCHA in 1997 after a successful 13-year partnership but it's wonderful to again have them on board as a sixth Association member beginning with the 2013-14 season.

"Northern Michigan is a first-class institution with a great college hockey tradition, enthusiastic fans and a supportive community in Marquette," added McLeod. "This is a great fit for both of us – again – and we all look forward to NMU's highly-skilled, tenacious style of hockey further enhancing an already-great brand of WCHA Hockey."

Said Northern Michigan University President Les Wong, "NMU is honored that the WCHA approached us with the idea of rejoining its hockey conference. The schools that will be in the WCHA in 2013-14 share many similarities with Northern. We all have similar locations with hometowns that passionately support their hockey programs. We also all offer similar academic offerings and have similar student bodies. We all have strong NCAA Division II intercollegiate athletic programs but a Division I hockey program. Having our hockey team travel west also compliments our recruiting footprint for not just athletics, but the university as a whole."

Said NMU Interim Athletic Director Steve Reed, "We share many natural rivalries with the new WCHA programs and the league offers geographical balance for us. With the changing landscape in college hockey in 2013-14, it was important for us to consider all options and choose the one we felt works best for NMU hockey at this time."

Northern Michigan head hockey coach Walt Kyle, no stranger to the WCHA, said, "This is a time of change for college hockey and that doesn't worry me. I think when the dust settles, college hockey will be in as good, if not better shape – it will just look a little different.

"I've been saying all along that I know NMU will be in a great hockey conference over the next two years – in the CCHA and then in the WCHA. It's important that people know that we value our current CCHA members and hope to continue strong relationships with them in the future as part of our non-conference schedule. However,

playing in the same conference as Michigan Tech, our next-door U.P. neighbor, will boost that ongoing rivalry. It's always special to play the Huskies and I know the Upper Peninsula hockey fans will be excited that NMU-MTU battles will take on even greater importance being league games. Our recent history with St. Cloud State – going into double overtime in the NCAA Tournament against them two years ago – is also something we can build into a good rivalry. We do a lot of recruiting west of the U.P., so increasing our playing exposure in that direction is a plus.”

During their first tenure in the league, Northern Michigan competed for 13 seasons, winning the MacNaughton Cup as WCHA regular season champions in 1990-91, capturing three WCHA playoff titles and Broadmoor Trophies in 1988-89, 1990-91 and 1991-92, and as mentioned previously, taking home the NCAA Men's Frozen Four crown in 1990-91 when they forged a noteworthy 38-5-4 overall record and 25-3-4 WCHA mark. Included on that stellar 1990-91 club, guided by WCHA Coach of the Year Rick Comley, were the likes of All-American forward Scott Beattie (WCHA MVP, WCHA Scoring Champion), All-American defenseman and WCHA Student-Athlete of the Year Brad Werenka, and Second Team All-American goaltender Bill Pye. The Wildcats competed in the NCAA tournament while in the WCHA in 1989, 1991, 1992 and 1993 while other top finishes by NMU in the league standings were second in 1988-89 and third in 1991-92.

WCHA men's membership for the 2013-14 season includes University of Alaska Anchorage (UAA), Bemidji State University (BSU), Michigan Technological University (MTU), Minnesota State University, Mankato (MSU), Northern Michigan University (NMU) and St. Cloud State University (SCSU).

The WCHA, home to a record 37 national championships teams since it's founding in 1951, will continue to operate as a 12-team conference for the 2011-12 and 2012-13 seasons. Current members are University of Alaska Anchorage, Bemidji State University, Colorado College, University of Denver, Michigan Technological University, University of Minnesota, University of Minnesota Duluth, Minnesota State University, University of Nebraska Omaha, University of North Dakota, St. Cloud State University and University of Wisconsin.

Earlier this year (March 21) the Big Ten announced the formation of a new hockey conference that would include current WCHA-members Minnesota and Wisconsin and begin play in 2013-14. On July 13, WCHA members Colorado College, Denver, Minnesota Duluth, Nebraska Omaha and North Dakota announced they would be leaving following the 2012-13 season to form a new league (National Collegiate Hockey Conference) which will begin play in 2013-14.

## **About Northern Michigan University**

(Courtesy of Northern Michigan University – [www.nmu.edu](http://www.nmu.edu))

Northern Michigan University, located in Michigan's unique Upper Peninsula, is a dynamic four-year, public, coeducational university which offers 180 degree programs to nearly 9,400 undergraduate and graduate students.

Known for providing outstanding personal attention, more than 80 percent of NMU's 300-plus faculty members have doctorates or the highest degree in their fields, and a hallmark of the NMU experience is that full-time faculty members teach at all levels - freshmen through graduate courses. Northern is also one of three universities in the state of Michigan to serve a community college role for its region.

Marquette, a city of 20,000 residents found along the southern shore of Lake Superior, is Northern's home community. The 360-acre NMU campus is known for its safe, clean, friendly and natural environment. It features 52 facilities, including the newly constructed Seaborg Science Complex, a state-of-the-art venue with more than two dozen laboratories, and the newly renovated Thomas Fine Arts and Art and Design buildings. Northern's campus also houses a university theater, an award-winning library, a university center, two art galleries, and a three-structure sports and recreation complex of which one is the Superior Dome, the world's largest wooden dome.

NMU is one of the largest notebook computer campuses in the United States with all full-time students receiving either a ThinkPad or iBook as part of tuition. The university has national and international awards for its innovative work in the area of technology in higher education.

Among NMU's highly recognized programs are its Student Leader Fellowship Program (SLFP); First Year Experience (FYE) program; Honors Program; Freshman Fellows, a program that pairs incoming freshmen with faculty members for collaborative research; and its outstanding study abroad program. Northern supports more than 200 student organizations annually, including an active volunteer center that does extensive outreach with the Upper Peninsula community. The university is also the site of the United States Olympic Education Center (USOEC), one of only four Olympic training centers in the nation and the only one designated as an education center.

The NMU men's ice hockey team plays it's home games at The Berry Events Center, which opened its doors in October, 1999. The facility, which also is home to the NMU men's and women's basketball teams and USOEC short track speedskating squad, provides individual seating for approximately 3,800 fans, in addition to seats in 16 luxury boxes.

The ice surface for hockey is 200 x 100. Along the perimeter of the arena are four large concession areas, as well as standing room for approximately 400 fans.

### **History of WCHA Expansion and Contraction**

The Western Collegiate Hockey Association was founded in 1951 and began play for the 1951-52 season as the Midwest Collegiate Hockey League (MCHL) with the seven original members being Colorado College, University of Denver, University of Michigan, Michigan State University, Michigan Technological University, University of Minnesota and University of North Dakota.

Following the 1952-53 season, the MCHL evolved into the Western Intercollegiate Hockey League (WIHL) for 1953-54, maintaining the same original seven member teams. The conference continued play through the 1957-58 campaign.

There was no league play in 1958-59 after the WIHL was disbanded in March of 1958 for one season; however most of the original member teams continued to play home-and-home schedules. The seven original member teams then resumed formal league competition for the 1959-60 season under the new name Western Collegiate Hockey Association (WCHA).

For the 1965-66 season, the WCHA expanded to eight teams by adding the University of Minnesota Duluth. The University of Wisconsin was then admitted to the WCHA for the 1969-70 season to bring membership to nine teams, followed by the addition of University of Notre Dame for the 1971-72 campaign which upped the membership to 10 teams.

Michigan, Michigan State, Michigan Tech and Notre Dame then left the WCHA following the 1980-81 season to join the Central Collegiate Hockey Association (CCHA), reducing the WCHA to six teams for the 1981-82, 1982-83 and 1983-84 campaigns.

Michigan Tech then returned to the WCHA beginning with the 1984-85 season and together with newly-admitted member Northern Michigan University, brought league membership back to eight teams.

The WCHA then admitted St. Cloud State University as a ninth member for the 1990-91 season, followed by the inclusion of University of Alaska Anchorage as a 10th member for the 1993-94 season.

Northern Michigan then left the WCHA following the 1996-97 season to rejoin the CCHA. The WCHA then expanded again for the 1999-2000 season with the admittance of Minnesota State University, Mankato as a 10th member.

For the 2010-11 season, Bemidji State University and the University of Nebraska Omaha were granted admission to the WCHA to bring current men's membership to 12 teams, where it will remain through 2012-13.