



WCHA WEEKEND PREVIEW: FEB. 13-16, 2015

News and notes for the upcoming weekend of WCHA hockey

Opening Face-Off

- **NCAA-Best Four in the Top 10:** The WCHA has an NCAA-best four teams (tied with the ECAC) in both of the national opinion polls. Minnesota, Wisconsin and Minnesota Duluth are Nos. 2, 3 and 6, respectively, in both the USCHO.com and *USA Today/USA Hockey Magazine* polls, while North Dakota is No. 8/9.
- **Three in the PairWise:** With four weeks remaining until the NCAA Tournament field is selected, Minnesota (second), Wisconsin (third) and Minnesota Duluth (seventh) give the WCHA a trio of schools in the top eight of the latest PairWise rankings. North Dakota is just outside in the ninth spot, while Ohio State (12th) and Bemidji State (14th) round out the WCHA representation.
- **Winning Hockey:** Showcasing the league's impressive depth, the WCHA has matched the ECAC with an NCAA-best six of the nation's top 16 winning percentages: Minnesota (2nd at .871, 25-2-4), Wisconsin (3rd at .800, 22-4-4), Minnesota Duluth (9th at .650, 17-8-5), North Dakota and Ohio State (t-12th at .583, 16-11-3) and Bemidji State (16th at .550, 16-13-1).
- **Streaking Along:** Several WCHA teams are riding extended hot stretches. Wisconsin is second in the nation with a seven-game unbeaten streak (5-0-2) and is 16-2-4 in its last 22 contests. Minnesota (18-1-2 in its last 21 games) and North Dakota (6-1-1 in its last eight and 12-4-3 since Nov. 21) both snapped each other's unbeaten runs last weekend, but have been among the hottest teams in the country.
- **The Championship Chase:** Minnesota and Wisconsin have both secured home ice advantage for the first round of the 2015 WCHA playoffs, while the Gophers have a five-point lead with four games to play. Any combination of three Minnesota wins and/or Wisconsin losses would give the Gophers their third-straight WCHA regular season crown.
- **Race for Home Ice:** Four teams - Minnesota Duluth (42 points), North Dakota (41), Ohio State (37) and Bemidji State (35) are still alive for the final two home ice spots.
- **Nonconference Success:** The WCHA finished its 2014-15 regular season nonconference schedule with an NCAA-best 35-11-2 (.750) mark. In fact, the WCHA is the only D-I league to own a winning nonconference record.
- **Next Generation:** The WCHA has five of the nation's top 20 scoring freshmen in Minnesota's **Kelly Pannek** (1st at 1.23 points per game), Wisconsin's **Annie Pankowski** (2nd, 1.17) and **Emily Clark** (10th, 0.85), and Minnesota State's **Nicole Schammel** (17th, 0.66) and **Hannah Davidson** (20th, 0.56).

The Week Ahead

- **Full WCHA Slate:** With league points at a premium, a full slate of WCHA games is on tap this weekend: League-leading Minnesota hosts Minnesota Duluth in a top-10 showdown; Wisconsin visits Ohio State; Minnesota State hosts Bemidji State; and, St. Cloud State welcomes North Dakota. SCSCU hosts MSU on Monday night.

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No. 6 Minnesota Duluth (12-8-4, 42 pts. / 17-8-5) at No. 2 Minnesota (18-2-4, 60 pts. / 25-2-4)

Ridder Arena; Minneapolis, Minn.

Friday, Feb. 13 (7:07 p.m. CT) and Saturday, Feb. 14 (4:07 p.m. CT)

- In an intrastate, top-10 matchup, No. 2 Minnesota hosts No. 6 Minnesota Duluth. The Gophers are 42-24-7 all-time against the Bulldogs, including a win and shootout loss in the second week of the season.
- UMD junior G **Kayla Black** is ranked third in the nation with her nine shutouts, ninth with a save percentage of .938 and 13th with a goals against average of 1.62. Of players ranked in the top-20 for save percentage, Black ranks second with 676 total saves.
- Senior D **Bridgette Lacquette** ranks 12th among all NCAA blue liners with 19 points (6g-3a), and is tied with sophomore F **Ashleigh Brykaliuk** with the 12th most power play goals.
- Gopher junior F **Hannah Brandt** leads the WCHA and is second in the nation with 58 points (25 goals and 33 assists). Sophomore classmates **Milica McMillen** and **Dani Cameranesi** are tied for fourth in the nation with seven power play goals, while Minnesota holds the nation's top unit with a 31.2 percent success rate (35-of-112).
- Minnesota freshman F **Kelly Pannek** leads the nation's rookies with 38 points (11g-27a) and a 1.23 points per game average.

No. 3 Wisconsin (17-4-3, 55 pts. / 22-4-4) at Ohio State (11-10-3, 37 pts. / 16-11-3)

OSU Ice Arena; Columbus, Ohio

Friday, Feb. 13 (6:07 p.m. ET) and Saturday, Feb. 14 (4:07 p.m. ET)

- Ohio State looks to gain ground in the playoff chase when it hosts No. 3 Wisconsin, a team still in contention for the WCHA regular season title. In their last meetings, the Badgers earned a shutout sweep, outscoring the Buckeyes 9-0.
- Hoping to stop the Badger offense, freshman G **Kassidy Sauve** has earned six shutouts so far, ranking her seventh nationally, third in the WCHA and third nationally among her freshman peers. Her counterpart, redshirt junior G **Stacy Danczak** has a 1.49 goals against average and .929 save percentage in 13 games, ranking 13th in the nation and sixth in the WCHA.
- Reigning WCHA Rookie of the Week, F **Lauren Spring**, leads all Buckeye freshmen with eight (four goals, four assists) this season.
- On the other side, reigning WCHA Defensive Player of the Week, sophomore G **Ann-Renée Desbiens**, ranks second in the country in shutouts (11), third in goals against average (1.13) and fourth in save percentage (.942).
- The Badgers are tied for the nation's top defense, holding opponents to an average of 1.07 goals per contest. UW also ranks first in penalty kill conversion rate (.968), while on the offensive side, the Badgers' 3.47 goals per game average ranks fifth.

No. 9 North Dakota (12-9-3, 41 pts. / 16-11-3) at St. Cloud State (3-19-1, 11 pts. / 6-23-1)

Herb Brooks National Hockey Center; St. Cloud, Minn.

Friday, Feb. 13 (7:07 p.m. CT) and Saturday, Feb. 14 (3:07 p.m. CT)

- No. 9 North Dakota travels to St. Cloud State to face off in a conference series. UND is 2-0-0 this season against SCSU, outscoring the Huskies 9-2 in their previous meetings.
- UND junior G **Shelby Amsley-Benzie** leads the nation with a .950 save percentage. Her goals against average of 1.37 ranks third in the WCHA and fifth nationally. She also owns the program records for career shutouts and single-season blankings.
- Senior F **Josefine Jakobsen** is currently on a four-game point streak, having tallied three goals and one assist since Jan. 30. With a .897 efficiency rate while shorthanded, UND has the nation's sixth best penalty kill unit and third best in the WCHA. The team has also scored five shorthanded goals, good for fourth nationally.
- For SCSU, junior F **Molly Illikainen** leads the Huskies in points (16) and goals (9). Senior D **Audrey Hanmer** tops the team's assist lead with eight on the year.

Bemidji State (11-12-1, 35 pts. / 16-13-1) at Minnesota State (1-21-1, 4 pts. / 3-25-1)

All Seasons Arena; Mankato, Minn.

Friday, Feb. 13 (7:07 p.m. CT) and Saturday, Feb. 14 (3:07 p.m. CT)

- Bemidji State travels south to in-state rival Minnesota State for a weekend clash. The Beavers lead the all-time series lead by a 29-24-10 margin, including a sweep earlier in the season.
- The Beavers are one win shy of tying the program record for most wins in a single season. The 2011-12 squad holds the record with 17 victories.
- BSU junior F **Kaitlyn Tougas** has scored 12 points (7g-5a) in 11 career games against MSU, while leading the team with 22 points (9g-13a) overall this season.
- Sophomore G **Brittini Mowat** has 14 victories thus far, which is the most by a BSU goaltender in a single season in program history.
- MSU freshman F **Nicole Schammel** leads the Mavericks in scoring with nine markers, and ranks fourth among rookies in the WCHA.
- Senior netminder **Erin Krichiver** has totaled 776 saves so far this season, placing her in second place nationally.

Minnesota State (1-21-1, 4 pts. / 3-25-1) at St. Cloud State (3-19-1, 11 pts. / 6-23-1)

Herb Brooks National Hockey Center; St. Cloud, Minn.

Monday, Feb. 16 at 7:07 p.m. CT

- The Mavericks and Huskies meet Monday evening to wrap up their season series. The teams are 1-1-1 against each other this year, with SCSU capturing a shootout victory for the extra league point. Minnesota State won 5-1 on Feb. 2 in Mankato.

2015 WCHA FINAL FACE-OFF

Tickets for the premiere league championship in women's college hockey - the WCHA FINAL FACE-OFF - are on sale now. The 2015 WCHA FINAL FACE-OFF, which will determine the league's playoff champion and recipient of its automatic berth to the NCAA Tournament, will be held March 7 and 8 at Ralph Engelstad Arena in Grand Forks, N.D. All-tournament packages or single-session tickets can be purchased at the Ralph Engelstad Arena box office, Ticketmaster Ticket Centers, by calling 800-745-3000 or online at ticketmaster.com.

About Western Collegiate Hockey Association (WCHA)

The women's Western Collegiate Hockey Association has won a record 14 national championships in 15 years since its inception in 1999, while producing six Patty Kazmaier Award winners, 70 All-Americans and numerous Olympic and international team members. The eight-team Division I conference consists of: Bemidji State University (Beavers), the University of Minnesota (Golden Gophers), the University of Minnesota Duluth (Bulldogs), Minnesota State University (Mavericks), the University of North Dakota, Ohio State University (Buckeyes), St. Cloud State University (Huskies) and the University of Wisconsin (Badgers).

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