



WCHA WEEKEND PREVIEW: FEB. 6-7, 2015

News and notes for the upcoming weekend of WCHA hockey

Opening Face-Off

- **A Look at the Polls:** The WCHA continues to be a fixture in the national opinion polls, with three teams in the USCHO.com ledger and an NCAA-best four schools (tied with the ECAC) ranked in the top 10 by *USA Today/USA Hockey Magazine*. Minnesota and Wisconsin are Nos. 2 and 3, respectively, in both polls, while *USA Today/USA Hockey Magazine* has Minnesota Duluth sixth and North Dakota eighth. The Bulldogs are No. 7 in the USCHO.com poll.
- **Three in the PairWise:** With four weeks remaining in the regular season, Minnesota (second), Wisconsin (third) and Minnesota Duluth (sixth) give the WCHA a trio of schools in the top eight of the latest PairWise rankings. North Dakota is just outside in the 10th spot, while Ohio State (12th) and Bemidji State (t-13th) round out the WCHA representation.
- **Winning Hockey:** Showcasing the league's depth, the WCHA has matched the ECAC with an NCAA-best six of the nation's top 16 winning percentages: Minnesota (2nd at .897, 24-1-4), Wisconsin (t-3rd at .804, 21-4-3), Minnesota Duluth (8th at .679, 17-7-4), North Dakota (12th at .589, 15-10-3), Ohio State (14th at .554, 14-11-3) and Bemidji State (16th at .518, 14-13-1).
- **Streaking Along:** Several WCHA teams are riding extended hot stretches. Minnesota's 19-game unbeaten streak (17-0-2) is the second-longest active streak in the country. North Dakota's six-game run (5-0-1) is third-longest and is part of a larger 11-3-2 run since Nov. 21. Wisconsin is fourth in the nation with a five-game unbeaten streak (4-0-1) and is 15-2-3 in its last 20 outings. Despite a winless weekend last time out, Minnesota Duluth is still 16-3-2 in its last 21 contests.
- **Securing Home Ice:** With sweeps last weekend, Minnesota and Wisconsin became the first two teams to secure home ice for the 2015 WCHA playoffs. Four teams - Minnesota Duluth (41 points), North Dakota (38), Ohio State (31) and Bemidji State (29) are still alive for the final two home ice spots, while UMD is still in contention for the league title.
- **Nonconference Success:** The WCHA wrapped up its 2014-15 regular season nonconference schedule with an NCAA-best 35-11-2 (.750) mark.
- **See you at the Rink:** Wisconsin (LaBahn Arena), Minnesota (Ridder Arena), Minnesota Duluth (AMSOIL Arena) and North Dakota (Ralph Engelstad Arena) rank 1-4 nationally in attendance.

The Week Ahead

- **Full WCHA Slate:** It's all WCHA games for the remaining three weeks of the season, beginning this weekend as the league's top four teams all square off: League-leading Minnesota travels to Grand Forks for a series against fourth-place North Dakota, while second-place Wisconsin hosts third-place Minnesota Duluth. Elsewhere, the other two teams seeking home-ice advantage host key home series as Ohio State welcomes Minnesota State and Bemidji State entertains St. Cloud State.

For the full WCHA weekly release, visit:

<http://www.wcha.com/women/pres1415/201502/feb4wcv.pdf>.

WCHA

No. 2 Minnesota (17-1-4, 57 pts. / 24-1-4) at North Dakota (11-8-3, 38 pts. / 15-10-3)

Ralph Engelstad Arena; Grand Forks, North Dakota

Friday, Feb. 6 (7:07 p.m. CT) and Saturday, Feb. 7 (4:07 p.m. CT)

- League-leading No. 2 Minnesota travels to Grand Forks for a series against fourth-place North Dakota. Earlier this season, the Gophers won both contests at Ridder Arena.
- Both teams are playing some of their best hockey of the season. The Gophers are 17-0-2 in their last 19 games, while UND is undefeated in six straight games (5-0-1) and is 11-3-2 since Nov. 21.
- UND junior G **Shelby Amsley-Benzie**, recently awarded the WCHA Defensive Player of the Week, currently leads the nation with a .949 save percentage and sits fifth nationally with a goals against average of 1.35.
- Junior forwards **Meghan Dufault** and **Becca Kohler** lead North Dakota with 24 points each.
- Gophers' junior D **Milica McMillen** is tied for third in the nation with seven power play goals, while sophomore F **Dani Cameranesi** is tied for second in the NCAA with five game-winning scores. Freshman F **Kelly Pannek** leads the nation's rookies with 38 points and a 1.31 points per game average.
- Minnesota is 55-0-1 in its last 56 true road games (not counting neutral-site games), having not lost a true road game since Jan. 13, 2012 at Minnesota Duluth.

No. 7/6 Minnesota Duluth (12-7-3, 41 pts. / 17-7-4) at No. 3 Wisconsin (16-4-2, 50 pts. / 21-4-3)

LaBahn Arena; Madison, Wisc.

Friday, Feb. 6 (7:07 p.m. CT) and Saturday, Feb. 7 (7:37 p.m. CT)

- In a battle of two top-10 teams, No. 7/6 Minnesota Duluth visits Madison to take on No. 3 Wisconsin. This will be the 74th and 75th times that the two programs have met, with the Badgers owning an all-time series lead of 33-29-11.
- Leading the Bulldogs in point totals, senior F **Zoe Hickel** and sophomore F **Ashleigh Brykaliuk** sit together at the top with 28 points apiece. Hickel, who has five goals and seven assists in her last nine games, also owns the team lead in goals with 16.
- UW sophomore G **Ann-Renée Desbiens** ranks second in the country in shutouts with nine, as well as fourth nationally in goals against average (1.22) and winning percentage (.780). Following suit, freshman F **Annie Pankowski** is tied for second among NCAA freshmen in scoring, holding an average of 1.15 goals per game.
- The Badgers have scored more shorthanded goals (4) than they have allowed power-play goals (3) this season. UW leads the country by killing 96.5 percent of opponent power-plays.

Minnesota State (1-19-1, 4 pts. / 3-23-1) at Ohio State (9-10-3, 31 pts. / 14-11-3)

OSU Ice Rink; Columbus, Ohio

Friday, Feb. 6 (6:07 p.m. ET) and Saturday, Feb. 7 (2:07 p.m. ET)

- Ohio State, just seven points out of a home-ice slot for the WCHA playoffs, welcomes Minnesota State to Columbus for a weekend conference matchup.
- Last year, the Buckeyes earned a sweep over the Mavericks, winning both decisions by a pair of goals.
- Rookie G **Kassidy Suave** has been solid in net for the Buckeyes, retaining a save percentage of .921 and a goals against average of 2.12. Her five shutouts rank seventh nationally (third amongst freshmen) and third in the WCHA.
- OSU senior F **Kayla Sullivan** was recently named one of the 15 nominees for the BNY Mellon Wealth Management Hockey Humanitarian Award, which is presented annually to college's finest citizen – a student-athlete who makes significant contributions not only to his or her team, but also to the community-at-large through leadership and volunteerism.
- Recent WCHA Rookie of the Week, Maverick freshman F **Nicole Schammel**, leads her team in scoring this season. Her 7 goals, 10 assists and 17 points rank her fourth among conference freshmen for scoring

**St. Cloud State (3-17-1, 11 pts. / 6-21-1) at Bemidji State (9-12-1, 29 pts. / 14-13-1)
Sanford Center; Bemidji, Minn.**

Friday, Feb. 6 (7:07 p.m. CT) and Saturday, Feb. 7 (4:07 p.m. CT)

- Bemidji State, just two points out of fifth place in the standings and still alive for the fourth spot (9 behind), plays host to St. Cloud State.
- Earlier this year, the Beavers and Huskies split a two-game set.
- BSU is led by junior forwards **Stephanie Anderson** with nine goals, and **Kaitlyn Tougas** with 20 points. Sophomore G **Brittini Mowat** (12 victories) is one win shy of tying the program record for victories by a goaltender in a single season. She is 12-9-1 this season with a 1.67 goals against average and .946 save percentage.
- Similarly, junior F **Molly Illikainen** leads the Huskies in points (15) and goals (9). Following behind, senior D **Audrey Hanmer** forefronts the team with eight assists.
- BSU ranks second nationally with 495 blocked shots, having led the country in the category for the past two seasons. Junior **Ivana Bilic** (108) and freshman **Alexis Joyce** (89) are ranked first and second, respectively, in the nation for blocked shots.

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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