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WCHA WOMEN'S LEAGUE

Bemidji State University
University of Minnesota
University of Minnesota Duluth
Minnesota State University
University of North Dakota
Ohio State University
St. Cloud State University
University of Wisconsin

HOME OF A RECORD 11 CONSECUTIVE NATIONAL CHAMPIONSHIP TEAMS

2000, 2001, 2002, 2003, 2004, 2005,
2006, 2007, 2008, 2009, 2010

2011 WCHA FINAL FACE-OFF

March 4-5 • Ridder Arena
Minneapolis, MN

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September 22, 2010/For Immediate Release

LEAGUE HEAD COACHES SELECT DEFENDING NATIONAL CHAMPION MINNESOTA DULUTH TO WIN WCHA IN 2010-11 COACHES PICK WISCONSIN SECOND, MINNESOTA THIRD IN PRESEASON WCHA COACHES POLL; UW'S KNIGHT PICKED AS PRE-SEASON PLAYER OF YEAR, MINNESOTA'S KESSEL TABBED AS ROOKIE OF YEAR; FOUR WOMEN'S TEAMS SET TO PLAY EXHIBITION GAMES THIS WEEKEND AS BEMIDJI STATE, NORTH DAKOTA HOST THE TORONTO JR. AEROS AND MINNESOTA, ST. CLOUD STATE HOST MANITOBA

MADISON, Wis. – Minnesota Duluth swept to the national championship in a memorable season last year (2009-10) and, according to a preseason poll of league coaches, the Bulldogs are the pick to repeat and win the Western Collegiate Hockey Association women's title again in 2010-11.

The Bulldogs, who shared the WCHA regular season crown with Minnesota last season and won the WCHA FINAL FACE-OFF before beating Cornell to win the national title, return 12 players and four skaters who competed in the Winter Olympics in Vancouver. Minnesota Duluth collected six first place votes and 48 points in the poll of the league's eight head coaches.

Wisconsin, which returns two Olympians and Coach Mark Johnson who led the U.S. Women's Olympic Hockey Team to a silver medal last winter, finished second with 43 votes, including two first place votes. Minnesota, with 37 points, was selected to finish third. Like UMD, Minnesota shared the 2010 WCHA title and qualified for the NCAA Women's Frozen Four last season.

Ohio State was picked to finish fourth, followed by North Dakota in fifth place, Bemidji State in sixth, St. Cloud State in seventh and Minnesota State in eighth.

Wisconsin junior forward Hilary Knight, a member of the U.S. Olympic Team last season, received six votes and is the head coaches' pick to be preseason WCHA player of the year. An AHCA Division 1 First Team All-American as a sophomore, Knight was also the WCHA Player of the Year and a Patty Kazmaier Memorial Award Top 10 finalist in 2008-09. North Dakota's Monique Lamoureux-Kolls,

con't

2009-10 WCHA FINAL STANDINGS

	Pts	Conference Only						Overall								
		GP	W	L	T	SW	Win%	GF-	GA	GP	Record	Win%	GF-	GA		
1 Minnesota Duluth	43	28	20-	6-	2	1	.750	90-	55	41	31-	8-	2	.780	138-	83
Minnesota	43	28	18-	6-	4	3	.714	91-	49	40	26-	9-	5	.712	129-	74
3 St. Cloud State	32	28	11-	11-	6	4	.500	70-	77	37	15-	14-	8	.514	96-	103
4 Wisconsin	31	28	15-	12-	1	0	.554	84-	63	36	18-	15-	3	.542	107-	82
5 Ohio State	28	28	12-	13-	3	1	.482	90-	94	37	17-	15-	5	.527	122-	117
Bemidji State	28	28	9-	12-	7	3	.446	47-	64	38	12-	19-	7	.408	65-	98
7 Minnesota State	18	28	5-	18-	5	3	.268	49-	92	34	7-	22-	5	.279	66-	117
8 North Dakota	16	28	7-	19-	2	0	.286	44-	71	34	8-	22-	4	.294	61-	92

(shootout win = 1 additional point)

THIS WEEK IN THE WCHA

Games for Friday, Sept. 24: Toronto Jr Aeros at Bemidji State (exh), 7:07 pm CT.

Games for Saturday, Sept. 25: Toronto Jr Aeros at North Dakota (exh), 2:07 pm CT; Univ. of Manitoba at St. Cloud State (exh), 7:07 pm CT.

Games for Sunday, Sept. 26: Univ. of Manitoba at Minnesota (exh), 2:07 pm CT.

Knight's teammate on the U.S. Olympic team, also received a vote.

Minnesota forward Amanda Kessel, whose brother Phil played with the Gophers and is currently with the Toronto Maple Leafs in the NHL, received six votes and is the coaches' choice as preseason WCHA rookie of the year while Wisconsin goalie Alex Rigsby received a vote and the Badgers' Madison Packer and Brittany Ammerman, both forwards, had a half vote each.

2010-11 WCHA COACHES PRE-SEASON POLL

Rank	Team (1st place votes)	Points
1	Minnesota Duluth (6)	48
2	Wisconsin (2)	43
3	Minnesota	37
4	Ohio State	30
5	North Dakota	27
6	Bemidji State	17
7	St. Cloud State	13
8	Minnesota State	9

(Note: coaches could not vote for their own teams in the poll and points were awarded on a 7-6-5-4-3-2-1 system.)

WCHA Pre-Season Player of the Year (votes): Hilary Knight, F, Wisconsin (7); Monique Lamoureux-Kolls, F, North Dakota (1).

WCHA Pre-Season Rookie of the Year: Amanda Kessel, F, Minnesota (6); Alex Rigsby, G, Wisconsin (1); Madison Packer, F, Wisconsin (½); Brittany Ammerman, F, Wisconsin (½).

WCHA PLAY BEGINS THIS WEEKEND WITH FOUR EXHIBITION GAMES SET FOR SEPT. 24-26

Western Collegiate Hockey Association on-ice play for 2010-11 begins this weekend with four exhibition games.

Bemidji State hosts the Toronto Jr. Aeros on Friday night and then North Dakota entertains the same Toronto Jr. Aeros team on Saturday. The University of Manitoba plays St. Cloud State Saturday at the National Hockey Center and faces Minnesota Sunday afternoon at Ridder Arena in Minneapolis.

The first regular season action for the new season will occur the weekend of Friday-Sunday, Oct. 1-3, in a series of non-conference matchups. Wisconsin will host Rensselaer Oct. 1-2 at the Kohl Center in Madison while North Dakota entertains Hockey East Association pre-season favorite Boston University Oct. 2-3 in a pair of matinee encounters at Ralph Englestad Arena in Grand Forks. Three WCHA teams open the regular season on the road Oct. 1-2 as St. Cloud State is at highly-touted Mercyhurst, Minnesota heads to Clarkson and Bemidji State visits Wayne State.

Minnesota Duluth plays a pair of exhibition contests against the Minnesota Whitecaps on Oct. 2-3 while Ohio State hosts Wilfrid Laurier in an exhibition Oct. 2 and then plays its non-conference opening series at Robert Morris Oct. 8-9. Minnesota State opens its season by hosting Niagara on Oct. 8-9.

League play starts the weekend of Oct. 8-10 when Wisconsin

hosts Bemidji State (Friday-Sunday) and Minnesota Duluth travels to North Dakota (Saturday-Sunday).

The battle for the 2010-11 WCHA regular season championship will again consist of a 28-game schedule for each of the league's eight clubs, with each team playing the other seven four times – twice at home and twice on the road. During the course of the season, there will be a total of eight weekends that will consist of all eight member teams engaged in WCHA play. The league schedule concludes Feb. 19.

WCHA ANNOUNCES 2010-11 WOMEN'S COMPOSITE SCHEDULE; LEAGUE LOOKS TO CONTINUE RECORD RUN OF 11 CONSECUTIVE NATIONAL CHAMPIONSHIPS

112-GAME LEAGUE SLATE TO LAUNCH OCT. 8; MINNESOTA DULUTH, MINNESOTA ARE DEFENDING CONFERENCE REGULAR SEASON CO-CHAMPIONS; NEW BUILDINGS OPENING AT BEMIDJI STATE, MINNESOTA DULUTH; 2011 WCHA FINAL FACE-OFF TO BE HELD MARCH 4-5 AT RIDDER ARENA IN MINNEAPOLIS; BULLDOGS ARE DEFENDING PLAYOFF CHAMPS; 2011 NCAA WOMEN'S FROZEN FOUR SET FOR MARCH 18-20 IN ERIE, PA ... UMD IS DEFENDING NATIONAL CHAMPION

MADISON, Wis. – The Western Collegiate Hockey Association's women's league, sporting a record 11 consecutive national team championships since its founding in 1999, released its 2010-11 composite schedule on Aug. 20, highlighted by the appearance of the WCHA FINAL FACE-OFF on March 4-5 at Ridder Arena in Minneapolis, Minn., and the opening of new arenas at league-members Bemidji State and defending national champion Minnesota Duluth.

Under the leadership of Associate Commissioner Sara R. Martin, the WCHA continues to set the pace in women's collegiate ice hockey.

"This will certainly be an exciting year for us, with two of our programs – Bemidji State and Minnesota Duluth – opening new arenas. The Robert M. Peters Rink at the Bemidji Regional Event Center (4,500) and Amsoil Arena (6,600) in Duluth are state of the art facilities that will provide great amenities for teams and fans," said Martin.

Bemidji State will play its first game in the new building on Oct. 15, when the Beavers host eastern power Mercyhurst for a two-game non-conference series. Minnesota Duluth will officially open Amsoil Arena on Dec. 30 with the U.S. Hockey Hall of Fame men's game between the Bulldogs and North Dakota while the women's team will first play in the new facility Jan. 21-22 against WCHA-foe Wisconsin.

"We also look forward to a highly competitive regular season in the WCHA. Each year our teams get stronger and the race to the championship gets tighter. Last year's co-championship between Minnesota Duluth and Minnesota was historic for us and just four points separated the next four teams at the end of the regular season. We feel the upcoming 2010-11 campaign may be our most tightly-contested season to date."

The WCHA FINAL FACE-OFF will again be contested at Ridder Arena in Minneapolis and hosted by the University of Minnesota, but with a new twist.

"We have opted to play the championship on Friday (March 4) and Saturday (March 5) this season and we anticipate that giving

us an additional boost. And as always, the four participating teams that earn the trip to the FINAL FACE-OFF will put everything on the line to win the tournament and receive the Association's automatic bid into the NCAA tournament championship field."

The initial on-ice action of 2010-11 will consist of four exhibition contests slated for Sept. 24-26 as Bemidji State and North Dakota take turns hosting the Toronto Jr. Aeros and St. Cloud State and Minnesota both entertain the University of Manitoba.

The first regular season action will occur the weekend of Oct. 1-3. In non-conference matchups Minnesota travels east to face Clarkson, St. Cloud State heads to Mercyhurst, Bemidji State is off to Wayne State, Wisconsin hosts Rensselaer and North Dakota hosts Boston University (Sat/Sun). In exhibition play, the UMD Bulldogs host the Minnesota Whitecaps for a pair of games.

The weekend of Oct. 8-10 will bring the first league encounters of the 2010-11 season as Minnesota Duluth ventures to North Dakota (Sat/Sun) and Wisconsin entertains Bemidji State (Fri/Sun). Outside the WCHA, Ohio State plays at Robert Morris, Minnesota State hosts Niagara, and St. Cloud State and Minnesota will take turns hosting Wayne State and the Minnesota Whitecaps (exh).

Other conference openers, by member team, are: Minnesota (Oct. 15-16 vs North Dakota), Minnesota State (Oct. 16-17 at Minnesota Duluth), Ohio State (Oct. 15-16 vs St. Cloud State), and St. Cloud State (Oct. 15-16 @ Ohio State).

Additional non-conference action this season, by member team, consists of the following matchups: Bemidji State (vs Mercyhurst, Oct. 15-16); Minnesota (vs Harvard, Nov. 26 & 28); Minnesota Duluth (vs Connecticut, Oct. 23-24); Minnesota State (@ Wayne State, Nov. 26-27 and vs Robert Morris, Dec. 3-4); North Dakota (@ Vermont, Jan. 7-8); Ohio State (vs Syracuse, Oct. 29-30 and vs Wayne State, Dec. 30-31); St. Cloud State (vs Mercyhurst and Northeastern as host of Easton Holiday Showcase, Jan. 1-2); and Wisconsin (@ Robert Morris, Nov. 19-20 and vs Northeastern and Mercyhurst @ Easton Holiday Showcase in St. Cloud, Jan. 1-2).

The pursuit of the WCHA playoff championship will get underway the weekend of Feb. 25-27 with the four first round conference playoff series. The top four ranked teams in the final regular season standings will host best-of-three playoff series against the bottom four ranked teams as the No. 1 seed hosts the No. 8 seed, No. 2 hosts No. 7, No. 3 hosts No. 6 and No. 4 hosts No. 5.

Those four first-round conference playoff winners will then advance to the 2011 WCHA FINAL FACE-OFF, set for March 4-5 at Ridder Arena in Minneapolis, Minn. There will be two semi-final matchups on Friday at 4:07 pm CT and 7:07 pm CT with the championship contest set for 7:07 pm CT on Saturday evening. Minnesota Duluth is the defending WCHA FINAL FACE-OFF champion.

Following the league playoff championship, four NCAA Div. 1 Women's Regional tournaments will be contested the weekend of March 11-14 at sites to be determined.

The four regional winners will then earn a trip to the 2011 NCAA Women's Frozen Four, which will be contested March 18 and 20 in Erie, Pa.

CHAMPIONSHIP TICKETS AVAILABLE FOR 2011 WCHA FINAL FACE-OFF

**ANNUAL LEAGUE PLAYOFF CHAMPIONSHIP TO BE HELD MARCH 4-5
AT RIDDER ARENA IN MINNEAPOLIS**

Tickets for the 2011 WCHA FINAL FACE-OFF championship, set for March 4-5 at Ridder Arena in Minneapolis, Minn., are available and on sale now through the University of Minnesota Athletic Ticket Office.

Three-game session tickets for the women's playoff championship tournament are available at three prices: \$20 for a reserved seat, \$18 for general admission, and \$15 for seniors and youth (age 18 and under). Tickets may be purchased by calling the Gopher Ticket Office at 612 624-8080, or 1-800-U-Gopher, or online at Gophersports.com.

Single session tickets, priced at \$15, \$12 and \$8, will be available on the days of the semifinals and championship game.

The two semifinal games will be played on Friday, March 4 at 4:07 pm CT and 7:07 pm CT.

The 2011 WCHA FINAL FACE-OFF Championship game will be played on Saturday, March 5, at 7:07 pm CT.

Directions to Ridder Arena

Located next to Mariucci Arena, which is on Fourth Street SE and Oak Street, Mariucci Arena is easily accessible from both interstates 94 and 35W.

From the north or south, take I-35W to the University Avenue exit and travel southeast to Oak Street. Turn left on Oak Street and travel one block north to Fourth Street.

From the west, take I-94 to 35W North and follow the above directions.

From the east, take I-94 to the Huron Boulevard exit. Follow Huron Boulevard north until it turns into Fourth Street at the intersection of Oak Street.

General parking is available in the Gopher lot across Oak Street from Mariucci Arena.