



PRESS RELEASE



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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

DENVER'S MURRAY ARMSTRONG NAMED WCHA 1960S COACH OF THE DECADE PRESENTED BY ANDERSON'S PURE MAPLE SYRUP AND SPIRE CREDIT UNION

Pioneers bench boss guided a powerhouse program in the league's second decade

BLOOMINGTON, Minn. – Jan. 6, 2021 – Former Denver head coach **Murray Armstrong** has been named the Western Collegiate Hockey Association's Coach of the Decade for the 1960s, presented by Anderson's Pure Maple Syrup and SPIRE Credit Union.

Armstrong led the Pioneers to five national championships, seven WCHA regular season championships, 10 WCHA tournament titles, 11 NCAA tournament appearances and eight trips to the national championship game in 21 seasons. He coached 23 All-Americans including Pioneer greats **George Konik, Bill Masterton, Keith Magnuson, Jim Wiste, George Morrison** and **Ron Grahame**, earned national recognition of his own as a two-time WCHA Coach of the Year (1961, 1968) and was the 1961 recipient of the Spencer Penrose Award as National Coach of the Year.

In the 1960s alone, the Pioneers captured four NCAA championships (1960, 1961, 1968, 1969), five WCHA postseason titles (1960, 1961, 1965, 1968, 1969) and four WCHA regular season titles (1960, 1961, 1963, 1968). His Denver squads posted a record of 229-70-17 (.751) during the decade, including a 118-48-6 (.703) mark in WCHA play.

His 1960-61 team is considered one of the greatest in NCAA hockey history. That season the Pioneers stormed to the national title with a 30-1-1 record.

Armstrong won Denver's first title in only his second year behind the bench with a win against North Dakota in the 1958 national championship game. After a one-year hiatus, he returned the Pioneers to the national stage with back-to-back titles in 1960 and 1961, defeating Michigan Tech and St. Lawrence to cap 27-4-3-4-1 and 30-1-1 seasons.

Armstrong's Pioneers also took the ice against international competition during their early rise, earning a 4-4 tie with the Soviet Union national team in January 1959 and tying U.S. national team a few weeks before that squad captured the gold medal at the 1960 Winter Olympics.

Armstrong's Pioneers repeated the back-to-back national championship run at the end of the 1960s as he took Denver to its fourth and fifth titles in 1968 and 1969. The 18-5-1 season in 1967-68 culminated with another title win against North Dakota and the 26-6-0 season in 1968-69 was capped with an 4-3 upset win against Cornell.

Armstrong, a Regina, Sask. native, came to Denver after five years coaching his hometown Regina Pats.

As a player, Armstrong played for the Pats before embarking on a 10-year professional career that included 270 NHL games for the Toronto Maple Leafs, New York Americans and Detroit Red Wings.

The NHL recognized Armstrong's contributions to the game in 1977 when the league awarded him the Lester Patrick Trophy for "outstanding service to hockey in the United States." In 1984, Armstrong received the Hobey Baker Legends of College Hockey Award and received the American Hockey Coaches' Association's John MacInnes Award in 1986.

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Armstrong is the second of seven Coach of the Decade honorees that will be announced by the WCHA during the 2020-21 season. The WCHA is also honoring an outstanding player and selecting an All-Decade Team for each decade as the league celebrates 70 Years of Excellence.

Murray Armstrong Year-by-Year

Season	School (Conference)	Overall	Conference (Place)	WCHA Postseason	NCAA
1956-57	Denver (WIHL)	12-14-2	6-11-1 (5 th)	No tournament	
1957-58	Denver (WIHL)	24-10-2	12-10-1 (T-1 st)	No tournament	National Champion
1958-59	Denver (Independent)	22-5-1			
1959-60	Denver (WCHA)	27-4-3	17-4-1 (1 st)	West Champion	National Champion
1960-61	Denver (WCHA)	30-1-1	17-1-0 (1 st)	West Champion	National Champion
1961-62	Denver (WCHA)	17-11-2	11-7-0 (3 rd)	Fourth place	
1962-63	Denver (WCHA)	23-9-1	12-6-0 (1 st)	Champion	Runner-up
1963-64	Denver (WCHA)	20-7-4	7-2-1 (2 nd)	Champion	Runner-up
1964-65	Denver (WCHA)	18-8-2	4-7-1 (6 th)		
1965-66	Denver (WCHA)	18-11-3	10-7-3 (4 th)	West Champion	Third place
1966-67	Denver (WCHA)	22-8-0	11-5-0 (2 nd)	Second place	
1967-68	Denver (WCHA)	28-5-1	15-3-0 (1 st)	West Champion	National Champion
1968-69	Denver (WCHA)	26-6-0	14-6-0 (2 nd)	West Champion	National Champion
1969-70	Denver (WCHA)	21-10-1	13-8-1 (T-2 nd)	Regional Final	
1970-71	Denver (WCHA)	25-10-1	15-7-0 (2 nd)	West Champion	Third place
1971-72	Denver (WCHA)	27-11-0	19-9-0 (1 st)	West Champion	Fourth place
1972-73	Denver (WCHA)	29-9-1	20-8-0 (1 st)	West Champion	Runner-up
1973-74	Denver (WCHA)	22-13-3	15-11-2 (3 rd)	Second place	
1974-75	Denver (WCHA)	12-23-1	9-22-1 (9 th)		
1975-76	Denver (WCHA)	16-23-0	12-20-0 (T-7 th)	First round	
1976-77	Denver (WCHA)	21-17-2	16-14-2 (4 th)	Semifinals	
Totals		460-215-32	255-168-13		

Other Top Coaches of the 1960s

John MacInnes, Michigan Tech: Won two NCAA titles, three WCHA regular season crowns and four WCHA postseason championships as the Huskies posted a 184-79-9 mark for the decade. **Al Renfrew, Michigan:** Won one NCAA championship and a WCHA regular season crown with the Wolverines while compiling a 163-99-9 record in from 1959-69.

Previous WCHA Coach of the Decade Winners

1950s: Vic Heyliger, Michigan

For more on the 1960s and the rest of the WCHA's history, visit wcha.com.

Celebrating 70 Years of Excellence

The WCHA will celebrate 70 Years of Excellence throughout the 2020-21 season. The league will name all-decade teams and players and coaches of the decade for each of its seven decades. The teams and individuals will be selected by a panel of current and former WCHA staffers and media members who have or are currently covering the WCHA. More than 200 nominees were submitted for consideration by the 21 schools that have called the WCHA home since 1951.

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About Anderson's Pure Maple Syrup

Anderson's Maple Syrup Inc. is proud to continue its 90-year tradition of producing, processing, and packaging consistently high-quality pure maple syrup, organic pure maple syrup, and other maple products. For more information, visit [Anderson's Pure Maple Syrup](#).

About SPIRE Credit Union

Founded in 1934, SPIRE Credit Union's commitment to friendly, personal and genuine service remains today. Founded as Twin Cities Co-ops Credit Union, SPIRE strives to improve lives through banking with a purpose as one of Minnesota's top credit unions. For more information, [SPIRE Credit Union](#).

About the Western Collegiate Hockey Association Men's League

The Western Collegiate Hockey Association, among the most historic, tradition-rich and successful conferences in all of collegiate athletics, is marking its 69th season of men's competition in 2020-21. The 10-team NCAA Division I 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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