



# PRESS RELEASE

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## **HOCKEY EAST EXTENDS CONTRACT OF COMMISSIONER JOE BERTAGNA** **~ Commissioner to reach 17 years of service through 2013-14 ~**

**Wakefield, Mass.** - Hockey East Commissioner Joe Bertagna has been given a contract extension through the 2013-14 season, it was announced today by Northeastern University Director of Athletics Peter Roby, chair of the Hockey East Executive Committee. Bertagna, who is already the longest serving commissioner in the conference's 28-year history, is beginning his 15th year with Hockey East after serving in a similar capacity with the Eastern College Athletic Conference (ECAC) for 15 years.

"This contract extension is well deserved and signals our excitement about the work that Joe and his staff have done to position Hockey East as the premier hockey conference in the country", stated Roby. "We are excited about our future with Joe as our commissioner and look forward to working with him for many years to come."

Bertagna is the longest current tenured conference administrator in college hockey with his upcoming 30th season of service.

"I am very pleased that the directors have seen fit to extend my service for three more seasons," said Bertagna. "I will take this as an endorsement of what our entire staff has been doing to advance the interests of not only Hockey East but college hockey as a sport."

Bertagna has carved out a unique career in the sport he first played as a freshman goalie at Harvard University in 1969. After spending 15 years as the primary ice hockey administrator the Eastern College Athletic Conference (ECAC), Bertagna became Hockey East's fourth commissioner on July 1, 1997. A native of Arlington, Massachusetts, Bertagna began working at the ECAC in 1982, when he was named Tournament Director. He was later named Executive Director of Ice Hockey and then became Ice Hockey Commissioner in 1991. In these roles, he administered regular season and tournament play for 90 men's and women's varsity programs. His accomplishments at the ECAC included the league's first television package, the first hockey-only corporate sponsorships, and the establishment of the first U.S. women's intercollegiate ice hockey leagues.

Bertagna made his mark immediately at Hockey East, engineering a multi-year television deal (SportsChannel New England) in his first month on the job. Shortly thereafter, league tournament attendance rocketed forward, leading to the event's first-ever sellout in 2000. Bertagna was also instrumental in bringing about the formation of the Hockey East Women's League, just as he initiated league play for both Division I and Division III women's programs while with the ECAC.

Hockey East has enjoyed unparalleled success on the ice during Bertagna's tenure, winning five national championships, including three of the last four, and regularly enjoying post-season accolades for many of its student-athletes. Five of the last nine players recognized as "Hobey Hat Trick" honorees have come from Hockey East.

Media coverage has soared in this period, as evidenced by the 2010-2011 CBS Sports Network Hockey schedule and a regional television partnership with the New England Sports Network (NESN) locally. Bertagna also oversaw the signing of the first regional radio contract for the Hockey East Championships when the Boston Bruins' flagship station, "98.5, the Sports Hub," broadcast the 2010 championships from the TD Garden.

In January of 2010, Bertagna and his staff administered the first outdoor college hockey game in the East when Boston's fabled Fenway Park hosted a Hockey East doubleheader. The event, which sold out on the first day of public sale in September of 2009, was an unprecedented success for the conference, both financially and in terms of exposure. The game was carried live on both NESN and the NHL Network.

Nationally, Bertagna has served as the Executive Director of the American Hockey Coaches Association since 1991, the only person to serve in that capacity. In that role, he has overseen the growth of AHCA membership from fewer than 300 members in 1992 to over 1,400 members today. He also served a four-year term on the NCAA Ice Hockey Rules Committee, the final two years as chairman. He also serves on the Board of Directors of USA Hockey and the Hockey Humanitarian Award Foundation.

Perhaps his biggest contributions on the national scene have come in his continuing role with the Hockey Commissioners Association (HCA). The commissioners of the five NCAA Division I men's ice hockey conferences have launched a number of initiatives that have helped grow the game on the national and international levels. In recent years, Bertagna was instrumental in securing funds for the formation of College Hockey, Inc., the marketing arm of the HCA, which was established in 2009.

Beyond his college hockey accomplishments, Bertagna has forged an international reputation as a student and coach of goaltending. No one in North America is respected more for his contributions to the study of the position. As a player, Bertagna began at Arlington (MA) High School, and then went on to Harvard University, playing for three Hall of Fame coaches: Ed Burns at Arlington and Ralph "Cooney" Weiland and Bill Cleary at Harvard. A two-year starter at Harvard (1971-72 and 1972-73), Bertagna led the Ivy League with a 2.45 GAA in 1972. After Harvard, he played professionally for the Milwaukee Admirals and in Cortina, Italy. He led his S.G. Cortina d'Ampezzo squad to the 1975 Italian Championship.

He began his professional coaching career in 1985 with the Boston Bruins, staying with the Bruins as the goaltender coach until 1991 and rejoining the team for the 1994-95 season. He also has coached with Team USA (1991 Canada Cup and 1994 Winter Olympics) and with the Milwaukee Admirals (1994-96). Bertagna has operated his own goalie clinics since 1973, and in that time, has coached thousands of goalies of all ages throughout New England. He continues to speak on the subject for USA Hockey throughout the United States. Through his camps, lectures, print materials and DVDs, he has influenced the teaching of young goaltenders more than any other goaltending coach in the United States.

Bertagna enjoyed a brief college coaching career at Harvard University in the late 1970's, serving as Men's Junior Varsity Coach in 1976-77 and launching Harvard's women's ice hockey program in 1977-78. He served as head coach of Harvard Women's Hockey for two seasons.

Bertagna and his wife Kathy, a two-sport athlete at Bates College, reside in Gloucester with their three children, Bobby (14), Joey (13) and Grace (10).

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