



PRESS RELEASE

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UCONN MEN'S HOCKEY TO JOIN HOCKEY EAST IN 2014-2015

Storrs, Conn. -- The University of Connecticut has been offered and has accepted an invitation to join the Hockey East Association in the sport of men's hockey in a joint announcement made on Thursday. Connecticut will join the league for men's ice hockey in 2014-15 and is already a member of the league in women's hockey.

Connecticut's membership in the men's league will put the conference at 12 teams for the 2014-15 season, including: Boston College, Boston University, Maine, Merrimack, UMass-Lowell, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, Northeastern, Notre Dame (beginning in 2013-14), Providence and Vermont.

The Huskies will continue to compete in the Atlantic Hockey Conference for the 2012-13 and 2013-14 seasons.

"This is a historic day in the history of the University of Connecticut and its Division of Athletics," said Director of Athletics Warde Manuel. "Hockey East is the premier men's ice hockey conference in the country and we are proud to say that the Huskies are now part of it. I would like to thank Hockey East Commissioner Joe Bertagna and the Athletic Directors at the institutions that comprise Hockey East for providing us this special opportunity. We are committed to developing a men's ice hockey program that can and will perform successfully on the national level and compete for Hockey East and NCAA championships.

"I would also like to recognize Commissioner Robert DeGregorio and our fellow Atlantic Hockey institutions for their support during this decision making process."

The Hockey East Association was founded in 1984 and league teams have won eight NCAA championships in the past 20 years. Hockey East teams have made 37 appearances in the Frozen Four and 21 appearances in national championship games in the 28-year history of the league. Since 1999, Hockey East has won six NCAA Championships and has placed 20 teams in the Frozen Four, along with 53 teams in the NCAA Tournament. Thirty-two Hockey East alums have won the Stanley Cup with their respective NHL teams.

"This is one of the most historic and significant days in the history of our conference," said Hockey East Commissioner Joe Bertagna. "We have enjoyed a terrific relationship with the University of Connecticut for more than a decade through our involvement with its women's hockey program. Today we start a new chapter in this relationship and we couldn't be more pleased.

"Warde Manuel and his staff did a commendable job in preparing for this moment and I would be remiss if I didn't acknowledge the role played by the state's biggest hockey fan, Governor Dan Malloy. Our directors have always said that we would welcome growth through any institution that brings value to our conference. No other school was better positioned to do this than the University of Connecticut."

UConn plans to play its home Hockey East conference games at the XL Center in downtown Hartford and will continue to play non-conference games in Storrs at the Mark Edward Freitas Ice Forum. The XL Center is the longtime off-campus home of both the UConn men's and women's basketball teams.

"The State of Connecticut is very excited that UConn is joining Hockey East and will be bringing the passion of college hockey to downtown Hartford," said Connecticut Governor Dannel P. Malloy. "I have been a longtime fan of college hockey and believe that this is an incredible opportunity for the University. It is also a great opportunity to bring more top-flight events to the XL Center and further enhance the quality of life in downtown Hartford."

"We are thrilled with the University of Connecticut's decision to join Hockey East," said Chuck Steedman, AEG Management CT/XL Center Senior Vice President and General Manager. "AEG is extremely excited about the opportunity to play host to UConn Hockey at the XL Center and will support UConn's program in a variety of areas.

"We commend the forward-thinking vision of both the University of Connecticut and Governor Malloy, as Hockey East represents a major win for the state of Connecticut and the capital region will see the direct impact of these games being played downtown."

Connecticut currently does not offer athletic scholarships in men's ice hockey, but plans to elevate to the NCAA maximum of 18 scholarships as a participant in Hockey East. UConn will also add additional athletic scholarships to women's sports to ensure compliance with gender equity regulations.

UConn joins an elite group of seven other schools that compete on the national level as a member of the BCS Conference in football and play college basketball and college hockey in a national elite conference. Those other schools with their future conference hockey affiliation are: Boston College (Hockey East), Michigan (Big Ten), Michigan State (Big Ten), Minnesota (Big Ten), Notre Dame (Hockey East), Ohio State (Big Ten) and Wisconsin (Big Ten).

"It is a very exciting time to be part of the University of Connecticut and the joining of Hockey East is a reflection of the continuing efforts to advance our great university," said President Susan Herbst. "UConn is one of the top 20 public research institutions in the country, and our athletic prowess has been a terrific part of our overall success. I would like to thank Governor Malloy for his support of our membership in Hockey East. I am also extraordinarily grateful to the leadership of Hockey East, and to the university presidents of the league. We are honored to stand alongside such excellent institutions and look forward to meeting them on the ice."

The University of Connecticut first fielded a varsity men's hockey team in 1960-61. UConn elevated its program to Division I status in 1998-99 as a founding member of both the Metro Atlantic Athletic Conference (MAAC) and Atlantic Hockey in 2003-04.

"The entire UConn men's ice hockey family is very excited about this announcement," said UConn head coach Bruce Marshall. Marshall is a 1985 UConn graduate and former men's ice hockey student-athlete. He has been the head coach of the program since 1988 and is the winningest coach in program history as he enters his 25th season in 2012-13. "We are very grateful to the administration of the University and to the entire state for bringing Connecticut into Hockey East. From our current student-athletes to our dedicated hockey alumni base, there is great anticipation about this move. I believe that there is a strong appetite for this level of college hockey here in Connecticut and that Husky fans will embrace our entry in Hockey East."

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