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## **Joe Bertagna Honored with USA Hockey's Distinguished Achievement Award** *Bertagna to be Recognized at USA Hockey's Annual Congress in June*

**WAKEFIELD, Mass.** - USA Hockey announced today that Hockey East Commissioner **Joe Bertagna** will be awarded the 2017 Distinguished Achievement Award, one of the national governing body's most prestigious accolades, at the 2017 Annual Congress in Colorado Springs, Colorado.

Created in 1991, the USA Hockey Distinguished Achievement Award is presented annually to a United States citizen who has made hockey his or her profession and has made outstanding contributions, on or off the ice, to the sport in America.

The 2017-18 season marked Bertagna's 20th with Hockey East and 35th as an administrator at the conference level, which includes 15 years with ECAC Hockey. Bertagna recently signed a contract extension that runs through the 2019-20 season, extending his tenure as both the longest-serving commissioner in Hockey East history and the longest-serving commissioner in the six NCAA Division I ice hockey conferences. On May 16, he was named to the Massachusetts Hockey Hall of Fame Class of 2017.

Bertagna has carved out a unique career in the sport he first played as a freshman goaltender at Harvard University in 1969. Since starting as a player, Bertagna has served the game as coach, administrator and journalist. The latter role has been largely overshadowed by his coaching and administrative accomplishments but Bertagna has authored a number of books, the most recent being, "The Hockey Coaching Bible," released in the fall of 2015 by Human Kinetics. The collection of instructional pieces includes chapters written by a number of coaches with ties to Hockey East, including Bertagna, Mike Cavanaugh, Mark Dennehy, Nate Leaman, Jack Parker and Ben Smith.

Bertagna has also written numerous books on goaltending as well as a pictorial history of Harvard University athletics. In the mid-1980's, Bertagna also edited two editions of Not The Boston Globe, a successful parody of the daily newspaper sold throughout New England.

Bertagna is best known for his administrative work in college hockey. After spending 15 years as the primary ice hockey administrator the 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 before he was appointed Ice Hockey Commissioner in 1991.

Bertagna made his mark immediately at Hockey East, engineering a multi-year television deal with SportsChannel New England in his first month on the job. Shortly thereafter, league tournament attendance rocketed upward, leading to the event's first-ever sellout in 2000. Bertagna was instrumental in bringing about the formation of the Women's Hockey East Association, just as he initiated league play for both Division I and Division III women's programs while with the ECAC. In 2013, the directors recognized his contributions to the women's game by dubbing the Women's Hockey East championship trophy the Bertagna Trophy.

Hockey East has enjoyed unparalleled success on the ice during Bertagna's tenure, winning seven men's national championships, including 2015 champion Providence College and five of the last 10, and regularly enjoying post-season accolades for many of its student-athletes. Nine of the last 21 players recognized as "Hobey Hat Trick" honorees have come from Hockey East schools, including 2015's winner, Boston University's Jack Eichel.

Media coverage has soared under Bertagna's direction, as evidenced most recently by his engineering national deals with the American Sports Network for regular-season coverage and with the NBC Sports Network for the championship weekend. Alongside these deals, Bertagna has maintained a strong relationship with the New England Sports Network (NESN) for regional coverage of both regular-season and post-season games.

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Bertagna has also delivered a number of high-profile special events for Hockey East member schools. During the 2015-16 season, UMass Lowell and Northeastern University played in the Friendship Four Tournament over Thanksgiving weekend in Belfast, Northern Ireland, along with Brown University and Colgate University. In 2016-17, Vermont and Massachusetts flew overseas to compete in the second annual tournament, while it was announced in January that the competition will return for at least two more installments, sending Boston University, UConn, Maine, and Providence to Belfast in 2017 and 2018.

In January of 2010, Bertagna and his staff administered the first outdoor college hockey game in the east when Boston's fabled Fenway Park played host to a Hockey East doubleheader. The event, which sold out on the first day of public sale in September 2009, was an unprecedented success for the conference, both financially and in terms of exposure. In January 2012, Bertagna negotiated another contract with the Red Sox, creating a doubleheader for January 2012 featuring the league's four Division I state universities: Maine, Massachusetts, New Hampshire and Vermont. As in 2010, the event sold out, leading to the addition of third contest, BC vs. Northeastern. For the 2014 iteration, Bertagna negotiated for the inclusion of eight of Hockey East's 11 men's teams, including newcomer Notre Dame. The two doubleheaders attracted more than 57,000 fans to Fenway Park. Last season marked the return of Frozen Fenway, again featuring eight Hockey East schools as well as a women's contest between Boston College and Harvard.

Nationally, Bertagna has been the Executive Director of the American Hockey Coaches Association since 1991, the only person to serve in that capacity. In this role, he has overseen the growth of AHCA membership from fewer than 300 members in 1992 to more than 1,400 members today. He has served two separate stints on the NCAA Ice Hockey Rules Committee, chairing the committee in first time through and currently back as a committee member this year. He also serves on the Board of Directors of both USA Hockey and the Hockey Humanitarian Award Foundation.

Another major contribution on the national stage has come in his continuing role with the Hockey Commissioners Association (HCA). The commissioners of the six NCAA Division I men's ice hockey conferences have launched a number of initiatives that have helped grow the game at 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.

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. Last year, he celebrated his 42nd year as a goalie coach, having operated his own clinics for thousands of goalies of all ages throughout New England since 1974. 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. His seventh DVD, "Goaltending Today: Traditional Values through New Techniques," was released by Championship Productions of Ames, Iowa, in 2011.

He began his professional coaching career in 1985 with the Boston Bruins, remaining with the club as the goaltender coach until 1991 and rejoining the team for the 1994-95 season. He was also part of the coaching staffs of the U.S. Men's National Team at the 1991 Canada Cup, the U.S. Olympic Men's Ice Hockey Team at the 1994 Winter Olympics, and with the Milwaukee Admirals from 1994-96.

Bertagna enjoyed a brief college coaching career at Harvard University in the late 1970s, 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.

As a player, Bertagna began at Arlington (Mass.) High School, before going on to Harvard University. During his early career, he played for and learned from four Hall of Fame coaches: Ed Burns at Arlington, and Ralph "Cooney" Weiland, Bill Cleary and Tim Taylor 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 helped lead his S.G. Cortina d'Ampezzo squad to the 1975 Italian Championship.

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

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