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PRESS RELEASE

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VERMONT TO JOIN HOCKEY EAST IN 2005-06

League expands to 10 men's teams, seven women's teams

The University of Vermont has accepted an invitation from the Hockey East Association and will begin competing as a full member in men's and women's hockey starting with the 2005-06 season.

Hockey East Commissioner Joe Bertagna and Dr. Robert Corran, Director of Athletics at Vermont, made the joint announcement today at a press conference in Gutterson Fieldhouse. Corran and Mike Gilligan, special assistant to the director of athletics and the former men's hockey coach at Vermont, met with Bertagna and the Hockey East Athletics Directors Tuesday in Andover, Mass., to discuss the potential partnership. Hockey East extended a formal invitation shortly thereafter and Vermont subsequently accepted.

"It is an honor to accept Hockey East's invitation and we look forward to competing for a Hockey East championship beginning with the 2005-06 season," Corran said. "This is an exciting time for our staff, student-athletes, and the entire UVM community. We have sincerely enjoyed the many wonderful years we have spent in the Eastern College Athletic Conference (ECAC) and look forward to continuing our association with the ECAC and its member schools through the 2004-05 season and in non-conference play in 2005-06 and beyond."

"We are thrilled that the University of Vermont is joining the Hockey East family," said Bertagna. "It is rare that such an opportunity is met without the slightest trace of reservation. I can say with all sincerity that everyone associated with Hockey East has embraced this development with unusual enthusiasm and a sense of anticipation. The great tradition of UVM Hockey will fit perfectly within our own record of success."

Enthusiasm is broad in both organizations, from both coaches and administrators.

"This is absolutely the right move at the right time for Vermont," University of Vermont President Daniel Mark Fogel said. "Athletics is a window into the life of our university and this opportunity demonstrates that we are serious about our drive to raising the institution's competitive metabolism and enhancing our national profile as a school known for its academic excellence."

"This is an exciting time for collegiate women's hockey, as the game continues to grow," Vermont women's head coach Dennis Miller said. "Hockey East is poised to grow as well, and we are excited to be joining the existing programs in the conference in 2005-06."

"I am very pleased with the decision to move to Hockey East," UVM men's head coach Kevin Sneddon said. "I had complete faith and trust in President Fogel and Dr. Corran during this process. Their vision has always been to provide our student-athletes with the best competitive experiences possible. We all feel that Hockey East is a great fit for the University of Vermont, and that the University of Vermont is a great fit for Hockey East."

Sneddon, like Corran, made it clear that Vermont will still welcome contests against ECAC teams. "The ECAC is comprised of great academic and athletic institutions and we look forward to continuing competition with those elite programs," he said. "I know everyone here at the University of Vermont will always value the relationship we have had and will continue to have with the ECAC."

Vermont has played Division I men's hockey in the ECAC since moving to Division I in 1974-75, and was ECAC Division II champion in 1972-73 and 1973-74. The Vermont women's hockey program was upgraded to varsity status in 1998-99, and has shown consistent improvement as it moved into Division I competition in 2001-02. Like the men's program, the Catamount women's hockey program has produced standout players and All-Americans, ECAC All-Stars and record-holders.

Hockey East has continued a steady rise to prominence since its founding charter on July 11, 1983, when the Athletics Directors from Boston College, Boston University, New Hampshire, Northeastern, and Providence announced the formation of a new Division I men's ice hockey conference. Later that same summer, the Board of Directors approved the additions of the University of Maine and the University of Lowell (now UMass Lowell). Official conference competition of the seven-team league began with the 1984-85 season, and expansion broadened the league to nine teams with the additions of Merrimack College (1989) and the University of Massachusetts (1993).

The Women's Hockey East Association was founded in 2001 and included teams from five Hockey East institutions and the University of Connecticut. Although the women's league is still in its infancy, its member programs have storied histories that include several championships and individual awards at the highest levels of play. The first 14 ECAC championships were shared among New Hampshire, Northeastern and Providence, all charter members of Hockey East.