



PRESS RELEASE

Brion O'Connor
Director of Public Relations
Hockey East Association
591 North Ave – #2
Wakefield, MA 01880
Office: (781) 245-2122
Cell: (978) 609-7224
boconnor@HockeyEastOnline.com

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: SEPT. 26, 2006

RETURNING STARS GIVE EAGLES PRE-SEASON EDGE *Final Four from 2006 league tourney secure top spots among coaches*

With the likes of towering center Brian Boyle and impenetrable goalie Cory Schneider returning to The Heights, Boston College is the overwhelming favorite in the Hockey East pre-season coaches' poll. The Eagles garnered eight of a possible nine first-place votes (coaches couldn't vote for their own team) to easily outdistance their cross-town rivals at Boston University. However, the Terriers, as well as two traditional powerhouses, Maine and New Hampshire, weren't far behind.

BC Coach Jerry York lost only three players from a team last year that came within a whisker of sending the NCAA championship game against Wisconsin into overtime, eventually losing 2-1. A young defensive corps gained considerable experience during the team's march to the finals, and a pair of swift forward lines ensure that the Eagles will boast plenty of firepower.

Meanwhile, the Terriers, the defending Hockey East regular season and tournament champs, may still be playing with something to prove after being knocked out of the NCAAs by BC. Coach Jack Parker, coming off consecutive "Coach of the Year" performances, has battle-tested senior John Curry supplying solid goaltending, and a fleet of relentless forwards, including last year's Hockey East Rookie of the Year, Brandon Yip. To the north, Maine's Black Bears, behind a potent offense and imposing 6-foot-7 goalie Ben Bishop, are eager to repeat last year's impressive run to the Frozen Four, while Coach Dick Umile's Wildcats hope to find a scoring touch to complement the team's rugged defense.

Many league insiders are curious to see if Providence and Vermont can build on their strong seasons, when the Friars rallied around first-year Coach Tim Army to finished fifth, and the Catamounts made considerable noise in their inaugural Hockey East season. Coach Don "Toot" Cahoon's Minutemen plan to lean heavily on their veteran forwards and the potential of young netminder Jon Quick. Northeastern Coach Greg Cronin won't settle for anything less than a return to glory for the Huntington Hounds, which means the Huskies could prove a dangerous opponent. UMass Lowell must overcome the departure of gifted goaltender Peter Vetri, but Coach Blaise MacDonald has a knack for finding diamonds in the rough. Likewise, Merrimack Coach Mark Dennehey's Warriors have a young-but-talented nucleus to build around, including 12 new recruits.

Hockey East Coaches' Poll, 2006-07

1) Boston College (8)	89 points
2) Boston University	78
3) Maine (2)	75
4) New Hampshire	67
5) Vermont	57
6) Providence College	52
7) Massachusetts	37
8) Northeastern	35
9) UMass Lowell	32
10) Merrimack	18

(*) – Indicates first-place votes.

– **HockeyEastOnline.com** –