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PRESS RELEASE

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BOSTON UNIVERSITY FAVORED IN 2010 WHEA PRESEASON COACHES POLL ~WHEA season officially opens Friday, Sept. 24 at Maine~

WAKEFIELD, Mass. -- Hockey East Commissioner Joe Bertagna released the 2010 WHEA preseason coaches poll on Monday afternoon, which was announced this morning on the season-opening media teleconference with all eight head coaches.

The Boston University Terriers are the favorites to win the league championship for the first time in school history, under the direction of sixth-year head coach Brian Durocher. BU garnered six of the eight first-place votes and 55 total points. The Terriers are coming off their best season in program history, as they earned their first NCAA Tournament berth winning the 2010 WHEA Tournament Championship. BU has a talented group of returning players, which includes Tara Watchorn (Newcastle, Ont.), who was a Second-Team WHEA All-Star on defense. In terms of newcomers, the Terriers welcome transfer and WHEA All-Star Jenn Wakefield (Pickering, Ont.) and a very strong group of eight incoming first-year student-athletes.

Boston College (49 pts.) is right behind their archival Terriers with the two remaining first-place tallies. The Eagles return two-time WHEA Player of the Year Kelli Stack (Brooklyn Heights, Ohio) and starting goaltender Molly Schaus (Natick, Mass.) from the 2010 Silver Medalist U.S. Women's Olympic Team. BC will also return junior Mary Restuccia (Chester Springs, Pa.) and Ashley Motherwell (St. Charles, Ill.), as their top two returning scorers from last year's squad.

Providence College (42 pts.), the 2010 WHEA regular-season champions, will return goaltender Genevieve Lacasse (Scarborough, Ont.) and Ashley Cottrell (Sterling Heights, Mich.), both WHEA All-Stars from a season ago. The Friars return 88% of their offense from last year, after losing only three regular contributors from a season ago.

New Hampshire (35 pts.) is picked fourth in the poll this season after a NCAA berth a year ago and semifinal loss to BU in the conference tournament. The Wildcats will have to replace the scoring of graduates Micaela Long and WHEA Co-Player of the Year Kelly Paton. Sophomores Kristina Lavoie (Fonthill, Ont.) and Kristine Horn (Utica, Mich.) are the top two leading returners up front and will both look to take the next step after 20+ point seasons as freshman in 09-10. UNH will also return All-League defender Courtney Birchard (Missisauga, Ont.) for her final season in Durham.

Northeastern with 34 total points is right behind New Hampshire in the poll. The Huskies return 2010 WHEA Co-Player of the Year Florence Schelling (Oberengstringen, Switzerland) in goal. NU will rely heavily on Kristi Kehoe (Bakersfield, Calif.) and Brittany Esposito (Edmonton, Alta.) to increase Northeastern's offensive output. Head Coach Dave Flint returns from his assistant coaching duties with the U.S. Olympic Women's Hockey Team for his third season with Huskies.

Connecticut (31 pts.) will again be in the hunt this season with the return of junior goaltender Alexandra Garcia (Point-Claire, Que.). She led the conference last year with a 1.42 GAA in league play. The Huskies will have to make up for the loss of Cristin Allen on defense and Michelle Binning and Amy Hollstein up front.

Vermont (20) and Maine (14) rounded out the pre-season coaches poll. The Catamounts will have to replace their workhorse in net Kristen Olychuck, but return top scorers Celeste Doucet (Memramcook, N.B.) and Kailey Nash (Middletown, R.I.) from a season ago. The Black Bears are under the direction of first-year head coach Maria Lewis, who comes to the program as an assistant coach from North Dakota.

The ninth season of WHEA regular-season play will open when Maine hosts Sacred Heart at Alfond Arena for a two-game series beginning on Friday, September 24. Conference play will commence a week later on Saturday, October 2, as New Hampshire travels to Connecticut for league opener at Freitas Ice Forum in Storrs.

The regular season will determine the six teams that qualify for the Hockey East Championship Tournament. The third and fourth seeds in the tournament will host a quarterfinal round game on Saturday, Feb. 26 on their respective campuses. The advancing teams will then be reseeded with the top two seeds to play on the site of the highest seed in the semifinal round on Saturday, March 5. The winners will qualify for the ninth annual WHEA Championship Game on Sunday, March 6. The championship game will be televised by the New England Sports Network (NESN) and the winner will receive an automatic berth into the 2011 NCAA Tournament.

The Women's Hockey East Association is an eight-team, Division-I college hockey conference which began play in 2002-2003, with offices based in Wakefield, Mass. The league also sponsors an 10 team men's league which began play in 1984-1985.

2010-2011 WHEA PRESEASON POLL

Rk.	Team (FPV)	Pts.
1.	Boston University (6)	55
2.	Boston College (2)	49
3.	Providence	42
4.	New Hampshire	35
5.	Northeastern	34
6.	Connecticut	31
7.	Vermont	20
8.	Maine	14

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