

**WOMEN'S HOCKEY EAST SEASON OPENING
COACHES MEDIA TELECONFERENCE
(SEPT. 20, 2012)**

VERMONT HEAD COACH JIM PLUMER

Coach, this is your first season in Burlington, talk about how it's been so far and some of the things you expect to accomplish early on in the schedule?

"It's been a whirlwind over the last four months getting to understand the culture of a new school after having been at a place for nine years. And then the division three to division one transition has had a learning curve to it as well. But, I love being in Hockey East and the coaches have helped me navigate through some of the league issues. And now that we are a couple weeks into school, and the kids are here, and we've been on the ice a couple times, I feel more comfortable in the hockey part of it. Everything else besides coaching the team has been a lot to learn, it's been very different than where I was before. Having said that, I'm excited, and I think the kid's are generally excited. I think there's certainly a fresh air of excitement about a new system, a new way of doing things. I think in terms of the kids coming in with the enthusiasm for buying into something new, it's there, and that's been very energizing for all of us."

Could you maybe just talk about over the time you have seen the players, who has impressed you or who has caught your eye?

"Well we are battling with some injuries right now, so we have been on the ice twice since Saturday. So right now we are missing a couple of our kids who are generally recognized as being some of our better players. But, for right now, goalie Roxanne Douville looks to be in good shape. She has had a good experience this summer at Hockey Canada. I think Klara Myren looks refreshed and excited about hockey in a way that is a positive for all of us; those two probably more than anybody. Sara Campbell, who transferred here from UNH also after having a year off, a year of training, is in great shape and looks to be ready to go."

Talk maybe a little bit about the expanded playoff format? Have you heard anything about Hyannis and the semifinals being down on the Cape?

"I think from being at the Hockey East meeting last week people were excited, I don't think there's any hesitation about it. I know there was some, last year I think, people were wondering what it was going to be like. But I think the general consensus of what I heard was that it was a positive experience. So I think, I didn't hear any hesitation in people's voices about going back to Hyannis, so I think that's good. I'm not sure my team knows yet that everyone makes the playoffs. I talked to my captains about it the other day, and they almost didn't want to rest of the team to know. They felt like it would be a good incentive for them that we need to make a step up and play in a playoff game. Eventually they will find that out if they haven't already. But certainly, I think it's a nice thing for the league to give everybody an opportunity. I certainly have always felt that the goal was going to be to peak at the end of the season; and I've been on some teams that, or been a part of them, I haven't been on them, but have coached teams that have underachieved at the beginning of the season and have been able to put it together towards the end; so I think that's a nice incentive for everybody."

Coach, how about in terms of some of the team goals? Short-term and long-term? Where do you want the team to be at in terms of success?

“I haven’t sat down with the team yet and drawn up concrete goals. My goal is always to overachieve, I think it was difficult for me to realistically assess where we were, even though I have an idea of what the pecking order in the league was, and had a pretty good idea of what the problems were here that were getting in the way of any measurable success. I think that we really realistically look at this as being a process that’s going to take a couple years to get us into a place where we can feel like we have the confidence to compete all the time, with any team that we play. Maybe that’s not the right way to say it; the kids definitely believe they can compete at that level. Realistically we still have a couple years of building, and it’s going to take a couple years to figure out how I want this team to play. I think that we can make some immediate strides, but I’m not unrealistic about the talent level of some other teams, and maybe the depth of talent that some other teams in our league have. I haven’t sat down and gone through the schedule game by game and said this one we should win, could win; we are going to have figure it out as we go along a little bit.”

In terms of the freshman class, is there anyone that you think might make more of an immediate impact? Or is that up in the air right now?

“Well it’s small, it’s going to be two maybe three; well we have two kids that we recruited, one that I recruited, one that I inherited. And we’ve got a couple of kids that are vying for a walk on spot, and we are going to have a small roster to begin with. So I can tell you one thing, they are all going to make an impact, they are all going to play. I think that the two defenseman that we brought in, Dayna Colang from NAHA and Linda Jensen from British Columbia, are going to get their feet wet immediately, we don’t have any extra players. I think everyone is going to have to commit to what we are doing and make an impact. I think they are both good players, and are both going to get chances to play significant roles right away.”

Can we talk about how it is difficult with a small roster to have some interchangeable pieces, especially throughout the long season?

“We are already facing some obstacles with some injuries, on a roster that it is undersized to begin with. I think for one thing we are going to be keeping our fingers crossed that we can stay healthy, once we do get healthy. It’s a little bit of a glass half full thing, on the other hand everyone is going to get ample opportunity to play and to make contributions. I think the ability to minimize the drama of who is sitting in the stands, or who is on what line, can be a plus. And so I think we are going to take it from that perspective. I think the biggest challenge is in practice, not having enough kids to do some of the full ice things, or create the competition that you want in practice. I think it requires a little more creative thinking, I’m sort of known as a small games guy, and so I think that we can manage some of it. What it’s going to mean is some of those games early in the season almost become more on the job training because we are not able to do some of the things in practice that we can do with more people.”