



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

## NEW 'WCHA PLAYOFFS' AND 'WCHA CHAMPIONSHIP' TO BE HELD ON CAMPUS

*League playoffs to change to 3-3-1, host-site format beginning with 2016-17 season*

- Watch the WCHA Playoffs trailer, "There's No Place Like Home," produced by 867Studios, at [bit.ly/22f5aXS](http://bit.ly/22f5aXS)
- Download "WCHA Playoffs" and "WCHA Championship" logos, created by Adrenalin, Inc., at [bit.ly/1Te1AwH](http://bit.ly/1Te1AwH)

EDINA, Minn. – May 17, 2016 – Bringing the singular intensity and passion of playoff college hockey directly to its member institution fans, the entirety of the men's Western Collegiate Hockey Association (WCHA) postseason – from the quarterfinals through the championship game – will be hosted by the highest remaining seeds at on-campus venues, beginning immediately with the 2016-17 season.

Starting in 2017 and continuing for at least the next three seasons, the "WCHA Playoffs" will consist of four (4) best-of-three, quarterfinal round series hosted by the league's top four regular-season finishers on the first weekend of March, followed by two (2) best-of-three semifinal round series hosted by the highest remaining seeds on the second weekend of the month. The "WCHA Championship" will be a single game, hosted by the highest remaining seed, on the third Saturday of March (the same weekend as the "Final Five" of previous seasons). As has been the case since the 2013-14 campaign, the top eight teams from the WCHA regular season will qualify for the postseason.

"There is no greater thrill for hockey fans than watching their favorite team play for a championship on home ice," said WCHA President and Men's Commissioner **Bill Robertson** in making the announcement. "Much of what makes the WCHA so special are our passionate fan bases and fantastic in-arena atmospheres, which will only be heightened in a playoff series or in a single game with a championship and NCAA Tournament berth on the line.

"The opportunity to compete for the Broadmoor Trophy in a unique, frenzied atmosphere promises to be a fantastic experience for our student-athletes, our institutions and our fans. We look forward to watching a new WCHA tradition grow and flourish."

The WCHA Men's League Board of Directors, which voted unanimously to approve the new format, is currently chaired by Bowling Green State University President, **Dr. Mary Ellen Mazey**. "This is an historic moment for the WCHA, and the Board of Directors applauds Commissioner Robertson and our member institutions for moving the league forward into an exciting new era," Mazey said. "College athletics, at its core, is about providing the best possible experience for our student-athletes first, and our fans. By bringing our playoff tournament on campuses, in front of the tremendous fans that cheer our teams all season, we are changing the WCHA – and perhaps college hockey – for the better."

**Forrest Karr**, director of athletics at Northern Michigan University, serves as management council chair for the WCHA Men's League. "Over the last two years, WCHA coaches and athletic directors, in collaboration with the league office, have carefully examined many neutral site tournament options as well as several multi-weekend campus site playoff concepts," said Karr. "Discussions focused on decreasing travel and increasing rest for top teams leading up to the NCAA tournament, ensuring quality in-arena experiences for student-athletes, maximizing opportunities to qualify teams for the NCAA tournament, and guaranteeing consistent playoff revenue while also reducing expenses. No tournament format is perfect, but the advantages of this new model far outweigh the disadvantages. All ten athletic directors agree that this plan makes sense and will have a positive impact on our league."

Commented **Bob Daniels**, head coach at defending Broadmoor Trophy champion Ferris State University and coaches' chair for the WCHA Men's League: "Development-wise, this new format of home-ice advantage fits with what our players have experienced in juniors, and what those who play professionally will also face when pursuing a championship. The WCHA is, night in and night out, as tough and competitive a league as there is. As I've said before, whoever earns home-ice for the playoffs will have earned it, and whoever wins the Broadmoor Trophy is definitely a deserving champion."

"The bottom line is that hockey is the best sport there is, playoff hockey is the best of the best, and winning a championship in your home arena – or coming together as a team to win on the road – is one of the greatest feelings a player or coach can have."

Finally, Robertson added: "On behalf of the WCHA and our member institutions, I wish to extend our sincere gratitude to longstanding league partners at the Xcel Energy Center in Saint Paul, Minn. and, more recently, at the Van Andel Arena in Grand Rapids, Mich. Those groups, along with the staffs of the Minnesota Wild and Grand Rapids Griffins, worked tirelessly on behalf of the league to grow and sustain the WCHA Final Five. While we are excited to be back on campus, we acknowledge and thank our partners for their efforts to create a fantastic tournament."

The WCHA schedule will remain at 28 league games for the 2016-17 campaign, with the regular season concluding the weekend of Feb. 24-25. The full WCHA 2016-17 composite schedule will be released at 1 p.m. CT (2 p.m. ET / 10 a.m. AT) on Thursday, May 19.

#### ***About Western Collegiate Hockey Association (WCHA)***

The Western Collegiate Hockey Association, among the most historic, tradition-rich and successful conferences in all of collegiate athletics, proudly marked its 64<sup>th</sup> season of men's competition in 2015-16. The 10-team Division 1 conference consists of the University of Alabama in Huntsville (Chargers), the University of Alaska Anchorage (Seawolves), the University of Alaska (Nanooks), Bemidji State University (Beavers), Bowling Green State University (Falcons), Ferris State University (Bulldogs), Lake Superior State University (Lakers), Michigan Technological University (Huskies), Minnesota State University (Mavericks) and Northern Michigan University (Wildcats). For more information, visit [wcha.com](http://wcha.com).

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