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NMU'S PAYNE, MSU'S HUGGINS AND BSU'S WHITECLOUD NAMED WCHA PLAYERS OF THE WEEK FOR GAMES OF OCT. 6-9, 2016

EDINA, Minn. – Oct. 10, 2016 – A forward who produced an effort not seen by his school in a decade, a record-setting senior goaltender and a freshman defenseman who excelled on special teams in his collegiate debut highlight the men's Western Collegiate Hockey Association (WCHA) Players of the Week for games of Oct. 6-9, 2016. The honorees are: Northern Michigan junior forward **Robbie Payne** (Offensive Player of the Week), Minnesota State senior goaltender **Cole Huggins** (Defensive Player of the Week) and Bemidji State freshman defenseman **Zach Whitecloud** (Rookie of the Week).

WCHA Offensive Player of the Week

Robbie Payne, Jr., F, Northern Michigan (Gaylord, Mich.)

Payne had an outstanding opening weekend, tying for the WCHA lead with three goals and six points as Northern Michigan split a pair of games with Wisconsin at the Resch Center in Green Bay. The junior from Gaylord, Mich. helped the Wildcats to a 3-2, opening-night victory, as his second-period, power-play goal snapped a 1-1 tie and gave NMU a 2-1 lead they would not relinquish. Saturday night, Payne became the first Northern Michigan player to record a five-point game in 10 years, tallying two goals and three assists. Both of his goals were short-handed, the second was unassisted and both tied the game, once at 1-1 in the first period and then again at 4-4 late in the second. Although the Wildcats eventually lost a wild, 6-5 decision, Payne finished the night with a +4 rating. This is Payne's first career WCHA weekly award.

Honorable Mention: Daniel Brickley, So., D, Minnesota State (racked up a goal and five assists – including on all three Maverick goals Friday – in MSU's sweep of then-No. 17 Michigan Tech); **Phillip Marinaccio, Sr., F, Bemidji State** (had three assists – including helpers on both game-winners, to help the Beavers sweep then-No. 14/15 Bowling Green); **Chad McDonald, Sr., F, Ferris State** (notched two points, tallying one each night, in the Bulldogs' nonconference series against Western Michigan); **Taylor Munson, Jr., F, Alaska** (scored the game-winning goal in the Nanooks' season-opening win over Alaska Anchorage, logged an assist Sunday against then-No. 13/11 Minnesota).

WCHA Defensive Player of the Week

Cole Huggins, Sr., G, Minnesota State (Centennial, Colo.)

Huggins backstopped then-No. 19 Minnesota State to a season-opening sweep of then-No. 17 Michigan Tech, stopping 45-of-46 shots in the two wins. His .978 save percentage and 0.50 goals-against average both led the WCHA and ranked fourth nationally, while he was one of seven NCAA goaltenders – and the only WCHA netminder – to post a shutout last weekend. The senior from Centennial, Colo. turned aside 20-of-21 shots in Friday's 3-1 win before posting a 25-save blanking in Saturday's 4-0 triumph. Saturday's

shutout was the school-record 11th of Huggins' career (most among active NCAA goaltenders), while he now ranks sixth in Minnesota State history with 40 collegiate victories. This is Huggins' third career WCHA weekly award, including one Rookie of the Week honor during his 2013-14 freshman campaign.

Honorable Mention: Michael Bitzer, Jr., G, Bemidji State (stopped 42-of-44 shots to lead the Beavers to a season-opening sweep of then-No. 14/15 Bowling Green); **Davis Jones, Sr., G, Alaska** (made 19 saves in the Nanooks' 4-1, season-opening win over rival Alaska Anchorage); **Ryan Lowney, Sr., D, Ferris State** (scored the game-tying goal Friday at Western Michigan); **Brock Maschmeyer, Sr., D, Northern Michigan** (assisted on all three Wildcats goals in Friday's win, and finished the weekend with four blocked shots and a +2 rating).

WCHA Rookie of the Week

Zach Whitecloud, D, Bemidji State (Brandon, Manitoba)

Whitecloud had an impressive debut weekend, factoring heavily in Bemidji State's power play and on the blue line as the Beavers posted a season-opening sweep over then-No. 14/15 Bowling Green. Playing on the Beavers' top power-play unit, the freshman from Brandon, Manitoba scored BSU's first goal of the season at the 6:15 mark of the first period Friday – setting the stage for a 2-1 victory. Saturday, he earned an assist on the man advantage for Bemidji State's final goal in a 4-1 triumph. Whitecloud finished the weekend with four blocked shots, helping BSU hold the Falcons to just two goals.

Honorable Mention: Darien Craighead, F, Northern Michigan (scored twice during a 6-5 loss Saturday, one a game-tying goal and the other a go-ahead marker); **Marc Michaelis, F, Minnesota State** (had a three-point effort with a goal and two assists in the Mavericks' 4-0 win over then-No. 17 Michigan Tech on Saturday); **Craig Pefley, F, Ferris State** (assisted on three of the Bulldogs' six goals against Western Michigan, while finishing with 29-of-44 in the face-off circle); **Troy Van Tetering, F, Alaska** (scored his first collegiate goal Sunday against then-No. 13/11 Minnesota, finishing the weekend with a +2 rating).

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