



PRESS RELEASE



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TWENTY-ONE CURRENT AND FORMER WCHA PLAYERS DOT IIHF SEMIFINAL ROSTERS

*Current and former league players playing key roles for their countries
as the 2019 World Championship has reached the medal round*

BLOOMINGTON, Minn. – April 12, 2019 – The IIHF Women’s World Championship has reached the medal round and Saturday’s semifinals in Espoo, Finland, will have a decided Western Collegiate Hockey Association flavor as 21 current and former league student-athletes are playing major roles on three of the remaining four squads.

The United States enters the semifinals as the No. 1 team in the tournament and features 13 players with WCHA ties, including five who rank among the tournament’s top scorers. Former Wisconsin star **Hilary Knight** shares the team and tournament goal scoring lead with five. Former Minnesota Golden Gophers **Dani Cameranesi** and **Amanda Kessel** have both contributed three goals and two assists to the U.S. attack while Wisconsin’s **Annie Pankowski** has equaled the Gopher duo in points with five on two goals and three helpers. Former Badger star **Brianna Decker** has also contributed two goals and a pair of assists to the American attack.

Between the pipes Minnesota-Duluth goaltender **Maddie Rooney** is 2-0 for the United States and has yet to allow a goal in the tournament. Former Wisconsin netminder **Alex Rigsby** is 3-0 and sports a 1.33 GAA with one shutout in her starts for Team USA.

The United States will meet Russia in Saturday’s second semifinal at noon CT at Metro Areena in Espoo. The U.S. has reached the semifinals after posting wins over Finland (6-2), Canada (3-2), Switzerland (8-0) and Russia (10-0) in pool play and downing Japan 4-0 in Thursday’s quarterfinals. The contest will air live on NHL Network.

Team Canada’s roster boasts six WCHA players, led by former Ohio State Buckeye **Natalie Spooner**, who shares the tournament scoring lead with eight points on five goals and three assists. Spooner is joined by three other Canadian WCHA alumni among tournament scoring leaders – Wisconsin’s **Sarah Nurse** (2g-4a-6pts) and **Blayre Turnbull** (4-0-4) and Minnesota Duluth’s **Brigitte Lacquette** (5-0-5).

Host Finland has been backstopped by former Minnesota All-American **Noora Raty**. The Gopher goaltender has posted two of Finland’s three wins in the tournament, including a 4-0 shutout of Russia in pool play. Raty enters Saturday’s semifinal with a 2.79 GAA and 90.83 save percentage.

Canada will face Finland in Saturday’s first semifinal at 8 a.m. CT. That game will also take place at Metro Areena in Espoo and will air on NHL Network. Saturday’s winners will advance to the championship game on Sunday, April 14 at noon CT.

In all, 27 WCHA players representing six of the league’s seven teams have appeared at this year’s World Championships.

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Current and Former WCHA Players at the IIHF World Championships

By School

Minnesota (7): *United States*- Kelly Pannek, Lee Stecklein, Megan Bozek, Hannah Brandt, Dani Cameranesi, Amanda Kessel; *Finland*- Noora Raty

Minnesota Duluth (4): *United States*- Sydney Brodt, Maddie Rooney; *Canada*- Jocelyne Larocque, Brigitte Lacquette

Minnesota State (2): *Germany*- Lena Dusterhoft, Anna Fiegert

Ohio State (3): *Canada*- Natalie Spooner; *Finland*- Minttu Tuominen; *Switzerland*- Andrea Braendli

St. Cloud State (4): *United States*- Emma Polusny; *Switzerland*- Janine Alder, *Germany*- Laura Kluge, *Czech Republic*- Klara Hymlarova*

Wisconsin (7): *United States*- Annie Pankowski, Brianna Decker, Hilary Knight, Alex Rigsby; *Canada*- Emily Clark, Sarah Nurse, Blayre Turnbull

By Country

Canada (6)- *Minnesota Duluth*- Jocelyne Larocque, Brigitte Lacquette; *Ohio State*- Natalie Spooner; *Wisconsin*- Emily Clark, Sarah Nurse, Blayre Turnbull

Czech Republic (1)- *St. Cloud State*- Klara Hymlarova*

Finland (2)- *Minnesota*- Noora Raty; *Ohio State*- Minttu Tuominen

Germany (3): *Minnesota State*- Lena Dusterhoft, Anna Fiegert; *St. Cloud State*- Laura Kluge

Switzerland (2)- *Ohio State*- Andrea Braendli; *St. Cloud State*- Janine Alder

United States (13)-*Minnesota*- Kelly Pannek, Lee Stecklein, Megan Bozek, Hannah Brandt, Dani Cameranesi, Amanda Kessel; *Minnesota Duluth*- Sydney Brodt, Maddie Rooney; *St. Cloud State*- Emma Polusny; *Wisconsin*- Annie Pankowski, Brianna Decker, Hilary Knight, Alex Rigsby

*- Incoming 2019-20 freshman

About the Western Collegiate Hockey Association Women's League

The Women's League of the Western Collegiate Hockey Association celebrated 20 Years of Excellence during its 2018-19 anniversary season. The nation's premier women's hockey conference, WCHA member institutions have won a record 17 national championships since the league's inception in 1999 (including 16 of a possible 19 NCAA titles), while producing seven Patty Kazmaier Memorial Award winners, 101 All-Americans and numerous Olympic and national team members. The seven-team, NCAA Division 1 conference consists of: Bemidji State University (Beavers), the University of Minnesota (Golden Gophers), the University of Minnesota Duluth (Bulldogs), Minnesota State University (Mavericks), Ohio State University (Buckeyes), St. Cloud State University (Huskies) and the University of Wisconsin (Badgers). For more information, visit wcha.com.

MEDIA CONTACT

Todd Bell

Marketing & Communications Manager

E: tbell@wcha.com

O: 952.681.7668

M: 972.825.6686

MORE INFORMATION

Website: wcha.com

Twitter: [@wcha_mhockey](https://twitter.com/wcha_mhockey)

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