

**WESTERN
COLLEGIATE
HOCKEY
ASSOCIATION**
• FOUNDED 1999 •

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**HOME OF A RECORD
14 WOMEN'S NATIONAL
CHAMPIONSHIP TEAMS
SINCE 1999**

2000, 2001, 2002, 2003, 2004, 2005,
2006, 2007, 2008, 2009, 2010, 2011,
2012, 2013

**WOMEN'S MEMBER
TEAMS**

Bemidji State University
University of Minnesota
University of Minnesota Duluth
Minnesota State University
University of North Dakota
Ohio State University
St. Cloud State University
University of Wisconsin

**2015 WCHA
FINAL FACE-OFF
CHAMPIONSHIP**

March 7-8, 2015
Ralph Engelstad Arena
Grand Forks, ND

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September 8, 2014/For Release at 1:00 pm CT

**WCHA RELOCATES AND CENTRALIZES
OFFICES TO TWIN CITIES; ANNOUNCES NEW
STAFF MEMBERS TO AID CONFERENCE
PROMOTIONAL AND BUSINESS EFFORTS**

EDINA, Minn. – The Western Collegiate Hockey Association (WCHA) today announced the hiring of two new staff member to assist new commissioners Bill Robertson and Aaron Kemp.

Matt Hodson, who has spent time in Major League Baseball and also worked at a Director's Cup-winning Division 1 athletic department, the University of Minnesota central communications office and a Minneapolis-based public relations firm, has been named the associate commissioner for public relations and will oversee the league's external and internal communications, brand marketing and social media.

Alyssa Bennett has been named associate commissioner for the WCHA. She will manage the conference's budget and finance, handle vendor contracts, serve as a liaison with member institutions, handle office operations, marketing, social media, help manage the conference championships – the WCHA Final Five (men's) and WCHA FINAL FACE-OFF (women's) – and assist the commissioners with planning.

Hodson was with the San Francisco Giants media relations staff from 2001 until 2008. He played a key role in all communications efforts surrounding Barry Bonds' home run record chases in 2001 and 2007 and was also involved in media relations support for the 2002 World Series, the 2003 National League Division Series and the 2007 MLB All Star Game.

Hodson also served as the assistant athletic media relations director at Stanford University. While in Palo Alto, Calif., he led publicity efforts for the nationally-ranked Cardinal baseball and women's swimming and diving teams and served as the secondary contact for Stanford's football team.

A native of Sacramento, Calif., Hodson graduated from Santa Clara University. He and his wife, Betsey, reside in Minneapolis with their two children.

Bennett joins the WCHA with a background in business consulting for a strategic consulting firm in Minneapolis. She has experience working with corporate, non-profit and sports organizations and helping clients reach business objectives through communication and marketing tactics.

A Minnesota native, Alyssa attended the University of Minnesota, Twin Cities and resides in St. Paul, Minn.

In greeting Hodson and Bennett, the league says a fond farewell to Carol LaBelle-Ehrhardt and Doug Spencer, long-time aides to retiring commissioners Bruce McLeod and Sara Martin. Labelle-Ehrhardt, who worked in the WCHA office in Denver, Colo. with McLeod, has been the associate commissioner for operations and helped in the growth of the WCHA Final Five tournament, one of the premier events in men's hockey, at Xcel Energy Center in St. Paul, Minn. Spencer has served as the league's associate commissioner for public relations under former commissioners Otto Breitenbach and McLeod for 28 years in Madison, Wis.

"We are very excited to add Ms. Alyssa Bennett and Mr. Matt Hodson to our WCHA staff and I believe they will be able to make an impact on our overall operations," said Robertson. "Both Carol LaBelle and Doug Spencer have served our conference so well for many years and we wish them nothing but the best in their future endeavors and appreciate all their assistance during the transitional period."

"We appreciate all the work Carol and Doug have done in making the WCHA such a recognizable



and respected name in college hockey,” said Kemp. “We wish them well. We also look forward to Matt and Alyssa helping us build on the WCHA brand which Carol and Doug and the member-institutions have established.”

Bennett and Hodson will start their new jobs in mid-September and work in the league’s new centralized offices in Edina, Minn. Bill Brophy will continue to assist the conference in public relations for the women’s WCHA.

Greg Shepherd will remain as Supervisor of Officials for both the men’s and women’s league and is also based in the Twin Cities.

The WCHA opened its new offices in late August. The new mailing address is WCHA, Suite C, Minnesota State University, Mankato at Edina, 7700 France Avenue South, Suite 360, Edina, MN 55431. The office phone number is (952) 818-8869. Commissioners Robertson and Kemp feel that having the offices in one location will assist the league in marketing, promotional and sponsorship/partnership opportunities.

The eight-team women’s WCHA, which has won 14 national championships in 15 years since being founded in 1999, opens its 2014-15 season with three non-conference series and three exhibition games on the weekend of Sept. 26-27 and the first league series is Oct. 3-4 when Wisconsin plays at Minnesota Duluth.

The 10-team men’s WCHA, which has won a record 37 national titles since its founding in 1951, launches its 64th season with games Oct. 3-5. The league opening series, which starts the quest for the MacNaughton Cup, will be Oct. 4-5 when Michigan Tech plays at Lake Superior State.

– WCHA –