



## **WCHA WEEKEND PREVIEW: FEB. 20-22, 2015**

### ***News and notes for the upcoming weekend of WCHA hockey***

#### **Opening Face-Off**

- **NCAA-Best Four in the Top 10:** The WCHA has an NCAA-best four teams (tied with the ECAC) in both the USCHO.com and *USA Today/USA Hockey Magazine* polls: Minnesota (No. 2/2), Wisconsin (No. 4/3), North Dakota (No. 7/8) and Minnesota Duluth (No. 9).
- **Three in the PairWise:** With four weeks remaining until the NCAA Tournament field is selected, Minnesota (second), Wisconsin (third) and North Dakota (eighth) give the WCHA a trio of schools in the top eight of the latest PairWise rankings. Minnesota Duluth is just outside in the ninth spot, while Ohio State (12th) and Bemidji State (14th) round out the WCHA representation.
- **Winning Hockey:** Showcasing the league's impressive depth, the WCHA has an NCAA-best six of the nation's top 13 winning percentages: Minnesota (2nd at .879, 27-2-4), Wisconsin (4th at .781, 23-5-4), Minnesota Duluth (t-10th at .609, 17-10-5), North Dakota (t-10th at .609, 18-11-3), Bemidji State (t-12th at .578, 18-13-1) and Ohio State (t-12th at .578, 17-12-3).
- **Streaking Along:** Several WCHA teams are riding extended hot stretches. Minnesota is 20-1-2 in its last 23 games, while North Dakota is 8-1-1 in its last 10 contests and 14-4-3 in since Nov. 21. Wisconsin is 6-1-2 in its last nine outings, while Bemidji State has won four straight games.
- **Three-Peat:** Following a sweep last weekend, Minnesota has secured its third straight WCHA regular season championship (ninth overall). The Gophers will host a best-of-three WCHA first round playoff series at home against No. 8 seed Minnesota State the weekend of March 27-Feb. 1.
- **Second Playoff Series Set:** Second-seed Wisconsin will welcome No. 7 seed St. Cloud State to LaBahn Arena for a first round playoff series.
- **Race for Home Ice:** Four teams - North Dakota (47 points), Minnesota Duluth (42), Bemidji State (41) and Ohio State (40) are still alive for the final two home ice spots. A full breakdown can be found on pages 2-3 of this release.
- **Humanitarian Award Finalists:** Two WCHA student-athletes - Wisconsin's **Brittany Ammerman** and Minnesota Duluth's **Zoe Hickel** - are among the five finalists for the 2015 Hockey Humanitarian Award.
- **WCHA at Worlds:** The WCHA will be represented by 14 current or former players on the U.S. Women's National Team that will compete in the 2015 International Ice Hockey Federation Women's World Championship, March 28 to April 4, at Malmo Isstadion in Malmo, Sweden.

#### **The Week Ahead**

- **Full WCHA Slate:** With a four-way fight for two remaining home ice positions, all eyes this weekend will be on Duluth, Minn. (where fourth-place Minnesota State hosts sixth-place Ohio State); Bemidji, Minn. (where fifth-place Bemidji State welcomes Minnesota) and Grand Forks, N.D. (where third-place North Dakota hosts Minnesota State). Elsewhere, Wisconsin hosts St. Cloud State in a preview of a first-round WCHA playoff series.

All rankings listed by USCHO.com poll first, followed by *USA Today / USA Hockey Magazine* poll  
**WCHA**

**No. 2 Minnesota (20-2-4, 66 pts. / 27-2-4) at Bemidji State (13-12-1, 41 pts. / 18-13-1)**

**Sanford Center; Bemidji, Minn.**

**Friday, Feb. 20 and Saturday, Feb. 21 (2:07 p.m. CT both nights)**

- After winning five-of-six points from No. 2 Minnesota earlier this season in Minneapolis, Bemidji State looks to take the season series for the first time in school history. Despite being 0-1-1 this season, the Gophers still hold a commanding 58-5-7 series lead all-time.
- BSU junior F **Kaitlyn Tougas** leads her team with 25 points (11g, 14a) and is tied with fellow classmate, F **Stephanie Anderson**, for the team lead in goals with 11 each. Another junior, F **Kristen Huber**, is a player to watch this weekend as she has scored four career points (3g, 1a) in five games against Minnesota.
- Gophers' junior F **Hannah Brandt** sits second in the nation with 59 points, 26 goals and 33 assists, while freshman F **Kelly Pannek** leads all NCAA rookies with 39 points (12g, 27a).
- Minnesota has clinched its third straight WCHA regular season championship, while Bemidji State has set program records for league wins (13) and overall victories (18).

**St. Cloud State (4-21-1, 14 pts. / 7-25-1) at No. 4/3 Wisconsin (18-5-3, 58 pts. / 23-5-4)**

**LaBahn Arena; Madison, Wisc.**

**Friday, Feb. 20 (3:07 p.m. CT) and Sunday, Feb. 22 (12:07 p.m. CT)**

- No. 4 Wisconsin faces off at home against St. Cloud State in a preview of next week's opening-round, WCHA playoff series. The Badgers hold the series lead with a 59-7-2 mark, including a current 22-game winning streak against the Huskies.
- As a team, UW leads the nation in penalty killing (.960), sits second in scoring defense (1.12 goals per game average) and fifth in offensive production with a 3.41 goals per game average.
- Sophomore G **Ann-Renee Desbiens** ranks second in the country in shutouts with 12 this season. She also ranks third in the NCAA in goals against average (1.19) and fifth in save percentage (.940).
- Freshman F **Annie Pankowski** leads the Badgers in points and is tied for second in the country in the category among freshman. The rookie is averaging 1.13 points per game and her 35 total points are tied for the ninth-most ever by a Wisconsin freshman.
- SCSU junior F **Molly Illikainen** leads her team in goals (9) and overall points (18), while senior D **Audrey Hanmer** heads the assists column with nine.

**Ohio State (12-11-3, 40 pts. / 17-12-3) at No. 9 Minnesota Duluth (12-10-4, 42 pts. / 17-10-5)**

**AMSOIL Arena; Duluth, Minn.**

**Friday, Feb. 20 (6:07 p.m. CT) and Sunday, Feb. 22 (12:07 p.m. CT)**

- No. 9 Minnesota Duluth, fighting for home playoff ice with a one-point lead over Bemidji State and a two-point cushion over Ohio State, hosts the Buckeyes for a special Friday-Sunday series.
- Earlier this season, UMD went 1-0-1 in Columbus.
- Both Buckeye goalies – junior **Stacy Danczak** and freshman **Kassidy Suave** – rank in the top 10 in the conference in terms of save percentage. Danczak ranks sixth with a .926 percentage, while Suave places seventh with a .923 percentage.
- OSU is led in scoring by senior F **Taylor Kuehl** and sophomore F **Claudia Kepler**. Kuehl has recorded 22 points on 10 goals and 12 assists, with Kepler contributing a team-high 11 goals and 11 assists for 22 points.
- UMD senior F **Zoe Hickel** is in a tie with sophomore F **Ashleigh Brykaliuk** as the current point leaders of the Bulldogs with 28 each. Hickel owns a team-high 16 goals to go with 12 assists, while Brykaliuk has 14 goals and 14 assists.
- In net, Bulldog junior G **Kayla Black** owns a 1.76 goals against average as well as a .934 save percentage on the season.

**Minnesota State (1-24-1, 4 pts. / 3-28-1) at No. 7/8 North Dakota (14-9-3, 47 pts. / 18-11-3)**

**Ralph Engelstad Arena; Grand Forks, North Dakota**

**Friday, Feb. 20 (7:07 p.m. CT) and Saturday, Feb. 21 (4:07 p.m. CT)**

- No. 7 North Dakota, needing only a tie to secure home ice in the playoffs, takes on Minnesota State at home. UND is 8-2-0 in the last 10 meetings, sweeping the previous series this year by scores of 5-0 and 2-1.
- Backstopping UND, junior G **Shelby Amsley-Benzie** leads the nation with a .953 save percentage. Her goals against average of 1.25 ranks third in the WCHA and fifth nationally. In games played since Jan. 1, Amsley-Benzie leads the nation with both a .972 save percentage and a 0.72 goals against average.
- UND senior F **Josefine Jakobsen**, the team's goals leader with 13, has matched her career-high with a six-game point streak (5g, 2a). Last weekend, she passed Michelle Karvinen for No. 3 in the program's all-time scoring list.
- MSU freshman F **Nicole Schammel** now has a point total of 11-10—21, which leads her team in scoring, ranks fourth in the WCHA in scoring by a freshman and sits 16<sup>th</sup> among all NCAA rookies.
- Mavs' senior netminder **Erin Krichiver** has amassed a total of 898 saves so far this season, good for second in the nation. She has a .907 save percentage as well as a 3.98 goals against average in the current campaign.

### **PLAYOFF SCENARIOS**

Entering the final weekend of the regular season, the Nos. 1 (Minnesota), 2, (Wisconsin), 7 (St. Cloud State) and 8 (Minnesota State) seeds have been determined for the first round of the WCHA playoffs. Four teams - North Dakota, Minnesota Duluth, Bemidji State and Ohio State - are all in contention for the final two home playoff spots. Below is a list of scenarios to determine each school's seed:

#### **North Dakota (Currently #3 seed with 47 points)**

- Seeded #3 with 1 point or more.
- Seeded #3 with 0 points and 5 points for Minnesota Duluth.
- Seeded #3 with 0 points, 4 points or less for Minnesota Duluth, and 5 points or less for Bemidji State.
- Seeded #4 with 0 points, 4 points or less for Minnesota Duluth, and 6 points for Bemidji State.
- Seeded #4 with 0 points, 6 points for Minnesota Duluth, and 5 points or less for Bemidji State.
- Seeded #5 with 0 points, 6 points for Minnesota Duluth, and 6 points for Bemidji State.

#### **Minnesota Duluth (Currently #4 seed with 42 points)**

- Seeded #3 with 6 points and 0 points for North Dakota.
- Seeded #4 with 6 points and 1 point or more for North Dakota.
- Seeded #4 with 5 points and 5 points or less for Bemidji State.
- Seeded #4 with 4 points and 4 points or less for Bemidji State.
- Seeded #4 with 3 points and 3 points or less for Bemidji State.
- Seeded #4 with two shootout losses, and 2 points or less for Bemidji State.
- Seeded #5 with 5 points and 6 points for Bemidji State.
- Seeded #5 with 4 points and 5 points or more for Bemidji State.
- Seeded #5 with 3 points and 4 points or more for Bemidji State.
- Seeded #5 with one loss and one shootout win, and 2 points or less for Bemidji State.
- Seeded #5 with two shootout losses, and 4 points or more for Bemidji State.
- Seeded #5 with 1 point and 1 point or less for Bemidji State.
- Seeded #5 with 0 points and 0 points for Bemidji State.
- Seeded #6 with 2 points and 3 points for Bemidji State.
- Seeded #6 with one loss and one shootout win, and 4 points or more for Bemidji State.
- Seeded #6 with 1 point and 2 points or more for Bemidji State.
- Seeded #6 with 0 points and 1 point or more for Bemidji State.

### **Bemidji State (Currently #5 seed with 41 points)**

- Seeded #3 with 6 points, 0 points for North Dakota, and 4 points or less for Minnesota Duluth.
- Seeded #4 with 6 points, 0 points for North Dakota, and 5 points or more for Minnesota Duluth.
- Seeded #4 with 6 points, 1 point or more for North Dakota, and 5 points or less for Minnesota Duluth.
- Seeded #4 with 5 points, and 4, 3, 2, or 1 points for Minnesota Duluth.
- Seeded #4 with 4 points, and 3 or 2 points for Minnesota Duluth.
- Seeded #5 with 6 points, 1 point or more for North Dakota, and 6 points for Minnesota Duluth.
- Seeded #5 with 5 points, and 6, 5, or 0 points for Minnesota Duluth.
- Seeded #5 with 4 points, and 6, 5, 4, 1, or 0 points for Minnesota Duluth.
- Seeded #5 with 3 points.
- Seeded #5 with 2 points, and 6, 5, 4, 1, or 0 points for Minnesota Duluth.
- Seeded #5 with 1 point, and 6, 5, or 0 points for Minnesota Duluth.
- Seeded #5 with 0 points and 6 points for Minnesota Duluth.
- Seeded #6 with 2 points and 3 or 2 points for Minnesota Duluth.
- Seeded #6 with 1 point, and 4, 3, 2, or 1 points for Minnesota Duluth.
- Seeded #6 with 0 points and 5 points or fewer for Minnesota Duluth.

### **Ohio State (Currently #6 seed with 40 points)**

- Seeded #4 with 6 points and 5 points or less for Bemidji State.
- Seeded #4 with 5 points and 4 points or less for Bemidji State.
- Seeded #4 with a win, a shootout loss, and 2 points or less for Bemidji State.
- Seeded #4 with 4 points and 3 points for Bemidji State.
- Seeded #5 with 6 points and 6 points for Bemidji State.
- Seeded #5 with 5 points and 5 points or more for Bemidji State.
- Seeded #5 with two shootout wins, and 2 points or less for Bemidji State.
- Seeded #5 with a win, a shootout loss, and 4 points or more for Bemidji State.
- Seeded #5 with 3 points and 2 points or less for Bemidji State.
- Seeded #5 with 2 points and 1 point or less for Bemidji State.
- Seeded #5 with 1 point and 0 points for Bemidji State.
- Seeded #6 with two shootout wins, and 4 points or more for Bemidji State.
- Seeded #6 with 3 points and 3 points or more for Bemidji State.
- Seeded #6 with 2 points and 2 points or more for Bemidji State.
- Seeded #6 with 1 point and 1 point or more for Bemidji State.
- Seeded #6 with 0 points.

### **2015 WCHA FINAL FACE-OFF**

Tickets for the premiere league championship in women's college hockey - the WCHA FINAL FACE-OFF - are on sale now. The 2015 WCHA FINAL FACE-OFF, which will determine the league's playoff champion and recipient of its automatic berth to the NCAA Tournament, will be held March 7 and 8 at Ralph Engelstad Arena in Grand Forks, N.D. All-tournament packages or single-session tickets can be purchased at the Ralph Engelstad Arena box office, Ticketmaster Ticket Centers, by calling 800-745-3000 or online at [ticketmaster.com](http://ticketmaster.com).

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

The women's Western Collegiate Hockey Association has won a record 14 national championships in 15 years since its inception in 1999, while producing six Patty Kazmaier Award winners, 70 All-Americans and numerous Olympic and international team members. The eight-team Division I conference consists of: Bemidji State University (Beavers), the University of Minnesota (Golden Gophers), the University of Minnesota Duluth (Bulldogs), Minnesota State University (Mavericks), the University of North Dakota, Ohio State University (Buckeyes), St. Cloud State University (Huskies) and the University of Wisconsin (Badgers).

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