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WCHA ANNOUNCES 2015-16 COMPOSITE SCHEDULE
***Highlights include 112-game league slate, nonconference tests and
return of FINAL FACE-OFF to Ridder Arena in Minneapolis***

EDINA, Minn. – May 4, 2015 – The annual 112-game league slate, an exciting nonconference schedule and the return of the FINAL FACE-OFF playoff championship to Ridder Arena in Minneapolis highlight the 2015-16 composite schedule for the women’s Western Collegiate Hockey Association (WCHA), as announced today by Commissioner Aaron Kemp.

The announced schedule outlines weekend dates and opponents (both conference and nonconference) for each of the WCHA’s eight member institutions. Exact game days and times, which will follow the :07 and :37 format for league games and nonconference home contests, will be determined at a later date.

“On behalf of the WCHA and its member institutions, I am thrilled to announce the league’s 2015-16 schedule,” said Kemp. “The league has barely turned the page on a banner 2014-15 campaign, but we are already looking forward to dropping the puck again in September. I am excited to watch our conference compete in nonconference play, while our league race – which last season pitted four ranked teams and five 20-win squads – is arguably the sport’s best. I also look forward to welcoming three new head coaches into the WCHA family this fall.

“Additionally, the WCHA is excited to bring our playoff championship back to Minneapolis beginning in 2016,” said Kemp. “Having our jewel event in a central location over the next three seasons will allow us to grow this showcase for the WCHA’s exceptional teams, student-athletes and coaches.”

The full 2015-16 WCHA composite schedule can be found at the conclusion of this press release.

Nonconference Schedule

WCHA member institutions have 42 games scheduled with nonconference opponents, including contests against College Hockey America (22 games against five schools), ECAC Hockey (10 or 11 against five or six) and Hockey East (nine or 10 against four, five or six).

Among the highlights:

- Potential matchups against four of the six non-WCHA participants in the 2015 NCAA tournament (Boston College, Boston University, Harvard and RIT).
- Wisconsin plays Providence in a two-game series Oct. 2 and 3 in San Jose, Calif.
- Minnesota Duluth welcomes returning Frozen Four finalist Harvard for a two-game series Nov. 27-28. New Bulldogs head coach Maura Crowell was on the Crimson staff for the last five seasons.

Nonconference highlights continued:

- Ohio State will play in the inaugural Vermont Women's Hockey Classic, joining the host Catamounts, Cornell and Boston University.
- St. Cloud State plays at Merrimack in what might be the Warriors' first game at the Division I level as a member of Hockey East.

A full breakdown of nonconference opponents, by institution:

- Bemidji State – vs. Robert Morris, at Vermont, vs. Lindenwood
- Minnesota – at Penn State, vs. Yale
- Minnesota Duluth – at Lindenwood, at Boston College, vs. Harvard
- Minnesota State – vs. Union, at RIT, vs. Lindenwood
- North Dakota – vs. RPI, at Syracuse
- Ohio State – at Lindenwood, Vermont Women's Hockey Classic (Cornell, Boston University, Vermont)
- St. Cloud State – at Merrimack, at Lindenwood
- Wisconsin – vs. Providence (in San Jose, Calif.), vs. Lindenwood, vs. Dartmouth

League Play

The always-daunting 112-game league schedule, comprised of 28 games per each of the WCHA's eight member teams (four games – two home and two away – against each of the other seven members), begins the weekend of Oct. 9-11 with a full slate of four conference series. A total of 18 weekends will feature at least one WCHA matchup, including nine with all eight teams competing in league play (also Oct. 16-18, Oct. 23-25, Nov. 13-15, Jan. 15-17, Jan. 22-24, Jan. 29-31, Feb. 12-14 and Feb. 19-21).

Among the highlights:

- Minnesota and Wisconsin, who faced off in a 2015 Frozen Four semifinal, renew the Border Battle in Madison the weekend of Dec. 4-6 and in Minneapolis on the season's final weekend, Feb. 19-21.
- The Badgers and Bemidji State, opponents in the 2015 FINAL FACE-OFF championship game, meet the weekend of Oct. 23-25 in Madison and Jan. 15-17 in Bemidji.
- New head coaches make their WCHA debuts the weekend of Oct. 9-11 for Minnesota Duluth (at Bemidji State), Minnesota State (vs. North Dakota) and Ohio State (at Wisconsin).
- New OSU bench boss Jenny Potter, who starred for Minnesota Duluth during her playing days, returns to her alma mater with the Buckeyes the weekend of Dec. 11-13.
- North Dakota and Wisconsin, FINAL FACE-OFF semifinal opponents for three straight seasons, play the weekends of Dec. 11-13 (in Grand Forks) and Jan. 22-24 (in Madison). UND and Minnesota skate Halloween weekend in Grand Forks and Feb. 5-7 in Minneapolis.
- 2015 WCHA quarterfinal rematches occur between Minnesota and Minnesota State (Nov. 27-29 at MSU and Jan. 15-17 at UM), Wisconsin and St. Cloud State (Oct. 16-18 at SCSU and Jan. 29-31 at UW), North Dakota and Ohio State (Nov. 13-15 at UND and Feb. 19-21 at OSU) and Minnesota Duluth and Bemidji State (Oct. 9-11 at BSU and Jan. 22-24 at UMD).

2016 WCHA Playoffs and FINAL FACE-OFF

All eight teams advance to the 2016 WCHA playoffs, seeded by finish in the final regular season standings (three points earned for a WCHA win in regulation or overtime, one point for a league tie and one extra point awarded for a shootout victory). The tournament commences with a quartet of best-of-three, quarterfinal round series hosted at the home sites of the top four seeds the weekend of Feb. 26-28. The four winners advance to the 2016 WCHA FINAL FACE-OFF, set for March 5 and 6 at Ridder Arena in Minneapolis.

2014-15 – Another Banner Season

The WCHA won its 15th national championship in the league's illustrious 16-year history, as Minnesota capped the 2014-15 season by winning the Women's Frozen Four for the Gophers' sixth national title. The league also finished with an NCAA-best four teams (matching ECAC Hockey) ranked in the final opinion polls, with Minnesota followed by Wisconsin (No. 3 in the *USA Today/USA Hockey Magazine* rankings and No. 4 in the USCHO.com ledger), No. 8 North Dakota and No. 10 Bemidji State.

Among other highlights:

- For the first time ever, the WCHA featured five different 20-win teams: Minnesota (34), Wisconsin (29), North Dakota (22), Bemidji State (21) and Minnesota Duluth (20).
- Those five schools, along with Ohio State, combined to give the WCHA an NCAA-best (again, tied with ECAC Hockey) six of the nation's top 15 winning percentages.
- The WCHA boasted the best nonconference winning percentage in the country at .765 (38-11-2).
- In addition to Minnesota, the league was also represented in the NCAA tournament and Frozen Four by 2015 FINAL FACE-OFF champion Wisconsin.
- Wisconsin's Annie Pankowski was chosen as the National Rookie of the Year by the Women's Hockey Commissioners Association and USCHO.com
- Six players earned CCM All-America honors – First Teamers Brittni Mowat (BSU), Rachel Ramsey (UMN) and Hannah Brandt (UMN), and Second Teamers Shelby Amsley-Benzie (UND), Lee Stecklein (UMN) and Dani Cameranesi (UMN). The graduated Ramsey is the only one not returning in 2015-16.
- Brandt was a top-three finalist for the Patty Kazmaier Memorial Award. Gophers' teammates Cameranesi and Ramsey, along with UND's Ashley-Benzie, were among the top-10 finalists.
- Bemidji State's Jim Scanlan was tabbed Coach of the Year by USCHO.com, while the outlet named Amsley-Benzie, Brandt and Stecklein to its First Team, Ramsey and Mowat to its Second Team, and Cameranesi, Amanda Leveille (UMN), Pankowski and Kelly Pannek (UMN) to its Third Team.
- Wisconsin's Brittany Ammerman was the recipient of the 2015 BNY Mellon Wealth Management Hockey Humanitarian Award for her efforts in founding the Nikumbuke Women's Soccer League in rural Kenya, all while balancing a rigorous academic load and leading the Badgers on-ice.

About Western Collegiate Hockey Association (WCHA)

The women's Western Collegiate Hockey Association has won a record 15 national championships in 16 years since its inception in 1999, while producing six Patty Kazmaier Award winners, 76 All-Americans and numerous Olympic and international team members. The eight-team 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), the University of North Dakota, Ohio State University (Buckeyes), St. Cloud State University (Huskies) and the University of Wisconsin (Badgers). For more information, visit www.wcha.com.

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2015-16 WCHA Composite Schedule (as of May 4, 2015)

SEPTEMBER

Weekend of September 25-27

Robert Morris at Bemidji State (NC)
Minnesota Duluth at Lindenwood (NC)
Union at Minnesota State (NC)
Minnesota Whitecaps at Minnesota (EX)^

OCTOBER

Weekend of October 2-4

Bemidji State at Vermont (NC)
Minnesota at Penn State (NC)
Oct. 1 and 2
Minnesota Duluth at Boston College (NC)
Minnesota State at RIT (NC)
North Dakota at RPI (NC)
Ohio State at Lindenwood (NC)
St. Cloud State at Merrimack (NC)
Wisconsin vs. Providence (NC)
San Jose, Calif.

Weekend of October 9-11

Minnesota Duluth at Bemidji State*
St. Cloud State at Minnesota*
North Dakota at Minnesota State*
Ohio State at Wisconsin*

Weekend of October 16-18

North Dakota at/vs. Bemidji State*
Home and home
Minnesota at Ohio State*
Minnesota State at Minnesota Duluth*
Wisconsin at St. Cloud State*

Weekend of October 23-25

Bemidji State at Wisconsin*
Minnesota Duluth at Minnesota*
Minnesota State at Ohio State*
North Dakota at St. Cloud State*

Weekend of October 30-November 1

St. Cloud State at Bemidji State*
Minnesota at North Dakota*
Wisconsin at Minnesota State*

NOVEMBER

Weekend of Nov. 6-8

Bemidji State at Ohio State*

Weekend of Nov. 13-15

Bemidji State at Minnesota*
Wisconsin at Minnesota Duluth*
Minnesota State at St. Cloud State*
Ohio State at North Dakota*

NOVEMBER (CONT.)

Weekend of November 20-22

Minnesota Duluth at North Dakota*
Ohio State at St. Cloud State*
Yale at Minnesota (NC)
Lindenwood at Wisconsin (NC)

Weekend of November 27-29

Minnesota at Minnesota State*
Harvard at Minnesota Duluth (NC)
North Dakota at Syracuse (NC)
St. Cloud State at Lindenwood (NC)
Dartmouth at Wisconsin (NC)
VERMONT WOMEN'S HOCKEY CLASSIC
(Burlington, VT)
Ohio State, Boston University,
Cornell, Vermont (NC)

DECEMBER

Weekend of December 4-6

North Dakota at/vs. Bemidji State*
Home and home
Minnesota at Wisconsin*
St. Cloud State at Minnesota Duluth*

Weekend of December 11-13

Minnesota State at Bemidji State*
Minnesota Duluth at Ohio State*
Wisconsin at North Dakota*
U.S. HOCKEY HALL OF FAME GAME (TBD)
Minnesota vs. St. Cloud State (NC)

JANUARY

Weekend of January 1-3

Bemidji State at St. Cloud State*
Penn State at Ohio State (NC)
Lindenwood at Minnesota State (NC)
Jan. 3 and 4

Weekend of January 8-10

Ohio State at Minnesota*
Minnesota Duluth at Wisconsin*
St. Cloud State at Minnesota State*
Minnesota Whitecaps at North Dakota (EX)^
Lindenwood at Bemidji State (NC)
Jan. 6 and 7

Weekend of January 15-17

Wisconsin at Bemidji State*
Minnesota State at Minnesota*
North Dakota at Minnesota Duluth*
St. Cloud State at Ohio State*

Weekend of January 22-24

Bemidji State at Minnesota Duluth*
Minnesota at St. Cloud State*
Ohio State at Minnesota State*
North Dakota at Wisconsin*

JANUARY (CONT.)

Weekend of January 29-31

Minnesota at Bemidji State*
Ohio State at Minnesota Duluth*
Minnesota State at North Dakota*
St. Cloud State at Wisconsin*

FEBRUARY/MARCH

Weekend of February 5-7

North Dakota at Minnesota*
Minnesota Duluth at Minnesota State*
Wisconsin at Ohio State*

Weekend of February 12-14

Ohio State at Bemidji State*
Minnesota at Minnesota Duluth*
Minnesota State at Wisconsin*
St. Cloud State at North Dakota*

Weekend of February 19-21

Bemidji State at Minnesota State*
Wisconsin at Minnesota*
Minnesota Duluth at St. Cloud State*
North Dakota at Ohio State*

-END REGULAR SEASON-

WCHA QUARTERFINALS

Friday-Sunday, February 26-28

WCHA Quarterfinals
Best of three series, hosted by higher seed

2016 WCHA FINAL FACE-OFF

Ridder Arena; Minneapolis, MN

Saturday, March 5

Semifinal #1
Semifinal #2

Sunday, March 6

Championship Game

All dates subject to change

^ Denotes single-game; otherwise, all opponents listed are for two-game series

** Denotes Western Collegiate Hockey Association (WCHA) game*