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**WISCONSIN'S ANN-RENÉE DESBIENS WINS 2017 PATTY KAZ AWARD**  
*Record-setting netminder becomes third goaltender to earn college hockey's top honor*

EDINA, Minn. – March 18, 2017 – Wisconsin senior goaltender **Ann-Renée Desbiens**, who has staked her claim as one of the sport's all-time greatest during a record-setting run in the Badger net, has won the 2017 Patty Kazmaier Memorial Award as the top player in NCAA Division I women's ice hockey, the USA Hockey Foundation announced today. She becomes just the third goaltender to earn the award in its 20-year history, while she is the fifth honoree from the University of Wisconsin and the seventh recipient from the women's Western Collegiate Hockey Association (WCHA).

Desbiens, who will be in goal for Wisconsin on Sunday afternoon as the Badgers seek their fifth national championship, has capped a remarkable career with a stellar senior campaign. She enters tomorrow's Frozen Four title game leading the country with an 0.67 goals-against average, a .965 save percentage, 29 wins, a .912 winning percentage (29-1-4) and 17 shutouts. Desbiens, who has collected back-to-back shutouts in the NCAA tournament, has not allowed more than two goals in a game all season; in addition to her 17 clean sheets, she has yielded just a single goal in 11 other contests.

Already this year, the La Malbaie, Québec native has backstopped Wisconsin to its second-consecutive WCHA regular season title and its third-straight Final Face-Off crown. The Badgers have been topped the national opinion polls since the preseason, thanks in large part to Desbiens' 9-1-3 record, 0.83 GAA, .965 save percentage and five shutouts in 13 games against ranked opponents.

Desbiens' shutout Friday evening against Boston College in the Frozen Four semifinals was the 55<sup>th</sup> of her collegiate career, further extending her all-time NCAA record. She set the mark with her sixth clean sheet of the season, surpassing the previous standard of 43 set by Minnesota's Noora Rätty between 2010-13. Additionally, her current 0.89 career goals-against average and .955 save percentage would both also stand as NCAA records. Desbiens is 99-13-19 in her 121 games in a Wisconsin uniform; her victory total is currently the fourth-most in NCAA Division I women's history, just one shy of matching Mercyhurst's Hillary Pattenden (2009-12) and fellow Badger Alex Rigsby (2011-14) for second. Finally, her current .855 collegiate winning percentage is the fifth-best in the sport's history.

A three-time member of the WCHA All-Academic Team, Desbiens has been accepted into the Wisconsin School of Business to begin her Integrated Master of Accountancy degree. She has also made a tremendous impact in the Madison community, volunteering with the Badger Life program and at the Veterans hospital.

The selection process commenced in early February when NCAA Division I women's ice hockey coaches were asked to nominate players for the award. Players who were nominated by multiple coaches were then placed on an official ballot, which was sent back to the coaches to vote for the top-10 finalists.

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The three finalists, including the recipient of the 2017 Patty Kazmaier Memorial Award, were then chosen by a 13-person selection committee made up of NCAA Division I women's ice hockey coaches, representatives of print and broadcast media, an at-large member and a representative of USA Hockey, the national governing body for the sport of ice hockey in the United States. The independent accounting firm PricewaterhouseCoopers, LLP, tabulated the ballots.

Desbiens joins a prestigious list of all-time WCHA recipients of the Patty Kazmaier Memorial Award. The previous winners from college hockey's premier conference are: Minnesota's **Krissy Wendell** in 2005, Wisconsin's **Sara Bauer** in 2006, Wisconsin's **Jessie Vetter** in 2009, Wisconsin's **Meghan Duggan** in 2011, **Brianna Decker** in 2012 and Minnesota's **Amanda Kessel** in 2013.

#### ***About the Patty Kazmaier Memorial Award***

An award of The USA Hockey Foundation, the Patty Kazmaier Memorial Award is annually presented to the top player in NCAA Division I women's ice hockey. Selection criteria includes outstanding individual and team skills, sportsmanship, performance in the clutch, personal character, competitiveness and a love of hockey. Consideration is also given to academic achievement and civic involvement.

#### ***About Patty Kazmaier***

The Patty Kazmaier Memorial Award is named in honor of the late Patty Kazmaier, who was a four-year varsity letter-winner and All-Ivy League defenseman at Princeton University from 1981-86. An accomplished athlete who helped lead the Tigers to the Ivy League Championship in three consecutive seasons (1981-84), Patty Kazmaier-Sandt died Feb. 15, 1990, at the age of 28 following a long struggle with a rare blood disease.

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

The women's Western Collegiate Hockey Association has won a record 16 national championships in 17 years since its inception in 1999, while producing six Patty Kazmaier Award winners, 86 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](http://www.wcha.com).

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