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WCHA ANNOUNCES 2018-19 COMPOSITE SCHEDULE

League's 20th anniversary season, which concludes with the 2019 WCHA Final Faceoff, to feature an 84-game conference slate, nonconference tests and the inaugural in-season 'Minnesota Cup' tournament

BLOOMINGTON, Minn. – May 8, 2018 – The Women's League of the Western Collegiate Hockey Association (WCHA) today unveiled its composite schedule for 2018-19, the league's 20th anniversary season. As the WCHA celebrates 20 years of excellence, today's leaders and champions will play an 84-game league slate, along with several intriguing nonconference contests and the inaugural four-team "Minnesota Cup" tournament in January, before concluding the campaign with the 2019 WCHA Final Faceoff championship at Minneapolis' Ridder Arena on March 9-10.

The 2018-19 composite schedule, as announced by WCHA Vice President and Women's League Commissioner **Katie Million**, outlines weekend dates and opponents for each of the league's seven member institutions. Exact game days and times, which will follow the :07 and :37 format for league games and nonconference home contests, will be finalized and announced on a later date.

"On behalf of the WCHA Women's League and its member institutions, I am proud to announce the schedule for our 20th anniversary season in 2018-19," said Million. "Our league's history is one of unparalleled accomplishments and a bright future. The exciting schedule we have on tap for next season, with innovations such as the 'Minnesota Cup,' along with nonconference games against the best from around the country and our own, highly-competitive league schedule, creates a tremendous new chapter in the WCHA legacy.

"We look forward to announcing 20th anniversary details in the coming weeks and are thrilled to celebrate 20 years of excellence with our fans, student-athletes and programs in WCHA arenas next season!"

Minnesota Cup

The inaugural "Minnesota Cup" tournament will be played at the University of Minnesota's Ridder Arena on Jan. 5-6, 2019 and consist of four nonconference games featuring Minnesota Duluth, Minnesota State, St. Cloud State and the host Gophers. Saturday's semifinals pit the Mavericks against the Huskies and the Bulldogs vs. Minnesota, with Sunday holding the consolation and championship games. Future Minnesota Cup hosts include: Minnesota Duluth (2020), Minnesota State (2021), St. Cloud State (2022) and Bemidji State (2023), with the WCHA's five Minnesota-based member schools rotating in participation each season.

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League Play

The gauntlet that is the WCHA league schedule will once again feature 24 games in 2018-19, comprised of two series (one home and one away) against each of the other six member institutions. The chase for the regular season title begins the weekend of Oct. 5-7, when Minnesota Duluth hosts Minnesota, and concludes the weekend of Feb. 22-24. A total of 16 weekends will feature at least one WCHA series, including 12 with the full possible allotment of three league sets (Oct. 12-14, Oct. 19-21, Oct. 26-28, Nov. 2-4 Nov. 16-18, Jan. 11-13, Jan. 18-20, Jan. 25-27, Feb. 1-3, Feb. 8-10, Feb. 15-17 and Feb. 22-24).

Among the highlights:

- Back-to-back-to-back WCHA regular season champion Wisconsin begins pursuit of an unprecedented fourth-straight league crown when it hosts Minnesota Duluth the weekend of Oct. 12-14.
- The Badgers and Ohio State, who finished one-two in the 2017-18 WCHA standings before both advanced to the NCAA Frozen Four, meet Jan. 11-13 in Columbus and finish the regular season against each other Feb. 22-24 in Madison.
- Additional final-weekend matchups, which have annually impacted playoff positioning, include Minnesota at Bemidji State and Minnesota Duluth at Minnesota State. St. Cloud State wraps up its league campaign the weekend before, with a Feb. 8-10 trip to Duluth.
- The annual "Border Battle" between Minnesota and Wisconsin, which last year crowned the WCHA Final Faceoff champion (UMN) and produced a NCAA quarterfinal-round winner (UW), is revived with an Oct. 26-28 series at LaBahn Arena and a Jan. 18-20 set at Ridder Arena.
- Northern Minnesota rivals Bemidji State and Minnesota Duluth, which have met in WCHA tournament play three of the last four years (including the Beavers' quarterfinal-round upset of the host Bulldogs in 2018), face off Oct. 19-21 in Duluth and again Jan. 11-13 in Bemidji.
- Minnesota State and St. Cloud State renew acquaintances with an intra-state rivalry series Oct. 19-21 in Mankato and with a split set in St. Cloud (single games on Jan. 18 and Feb. 5).
- Minnesota, which ended Ohio State's first WCHA Final Faceoff appearance in five years with a 1-0 win in the 2018 semifinals, welcomes the Buckeyes back to Ridder Arena on Oct. 19-21 before visiting Columbus on Jan. 25-27.

Nonconference Schedule and Exhibitions

The WCHA, which led the nation with a .614 non-league winning percentage in 2017-18 (34-21-2), will play 54 games against teams from other conferences in 2018-19. The schedule features four of the five non-WCHA teams that qualified for the 2018 NCAA tournament, while including a minimum of 24 games against five College Hockey America (CHA) schools (with the potential for a 25th), 23 contests against nine ECAC Hockey opponents and at least six games against a trio of Hockey East programs (with a seventh game, against a fourth school, possible).

Among the highlights:

- Bemidji State opens the season by hosting back-to-back national champion Clarkson the weekend of Sept. 28-30, before visiting Hockey East runner-up Providence the following weekend. Minnesota Duluth will also face the Golden Knights, skating in Potsdam, N.Y. the weekend of Nov. 23-25.
- Ohio State and Colgate, two teams that made their first-ever NCAA tournament and Frozen Four appearances in 2018, will meet the weekend of Oct. 5-7 in Columbus, Ohio.

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- Along with the Beavers-Clarkson series, the season's opening weekend (Sept. 28-30) is a full slate of nonconference games. Minnesota hosts Mercyhurst, Minnesota Duluth welcomes 2017-18 Hockey East champion Boston College, Minnesota State hosts Rensselaer, Ohio State is at Quinnipiac, St. Cloud State travels to UConn and Wisconsin is on the road at Lindenwood.
- 2017-18 CHA regular season champion Robert Morris is on the docket for Minnesota State (weekend of Nov. 16-18 in Pittsburgh, Pa.) and Minnesota (Dec. 7-9 in Minneapolis). In addition to playing at Minnesota, defending CHA tournament champion Mercyhurst will host Wisconsin (Oct. 5-7) and Bemidji State (Dec. 7-9), while visiting Ohio State (Dec. 14-16).
- Minnesota will look to defend the WCHA's crown at the Windjammer Classic hosted by Vermont, won last year by Minnesota Duluth. The Gophers will face St. Lawrence on Nov. 23, followed by either Syracuse or the host Catamounts on Nov. 24.

In addition to these contests and the Minnesota Cup, there are a pair of designated nonconference games between WCHA opponents: Bemidji State and St. Cloud State will play Tuesday, Nov. 20, while the Beavers will host Minnesota State on Saturday, Jan. 19.

Finally, the WCHA's long-standing relationship with the Minnesota Whitecaps, an elite women's hockey team made up of post-collegiate players, will continue with five exhibition games in 2018-19. The Whitecaps will play single games at Minnesota Duluth (Sept. 22 and Nov. 3) and Minnesota State (Feb. 2), along with a two-game series at Ohio State (weekend of Jan. 4-6).

2019 WCHA Postseason Tournament

All seven league teams advance to the 2019 WCHA Postseason Tournament, seeded by finish in the final regular season standings. As a reward for emerging as either WCHA champion or co-champion following the league's 84-game schedule, the top-seeded team will earn a bye for the quarterfinal round and will advance directly to the Final Faceoff championship weekend. The remaining six teams will play best-of-three, WCHA quarterfinal-round series, hosted by the Nos. 2-4 seeds, the weekend of March 1-3. Those three winners will advance to join the top seed at the 2019 WCHA Final Faceoff. College hockey's top conference championship weekend is set for March 9 and 10 at Ridder Arena in Minneapolis.

About the Western Collegiate Hockey Association (WCHA)

The Women's League of the Western Collegiate Hockey Association has won a record 16 national championships in 19 years since its inception in 1999 (including 15 of a possible 18 NCAA titles), while producing seven Patty Kazmaier Award winners, 98 All-Americans and numerous Olympic and national team members. The seven-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), 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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