Daily Sports

WOMEN'S COLLEGE HOCKEY NCAA TOURNAMENT PREVIEW

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We are only 11 days away from crowning a women's collegiate hockey national champion. Only 11 teams remain in contention for this title.

Ohio State, Wisconsin and Minnesota all hail from the WCHA and make up three of the nation's top four teams. The conference final saw Ohio State take down Wisconsin to claim the one seed in the tournament.

Wisconsin and OSU have been the only finalists for the last three years and the only national champions in the last six, with 16 of 24 total champions coming from them or Minnesota.

The AHA tournament stakes involved more than just those playing. Due to the system that college hockey uses to decide NCAA berths, Mercyhurst could only make the tournament with a conference title win over Penn State. With a loss, Minnesota Duluth would instead qualify.

Though the Lakers fought well, the Nittany Lions were too much to handle, and Mercyhurst fell, letting Duluth in.

Coming into the ECAC semifinals, Quinnipiac, Princeton and Yale had already clinched NCAA appearances. In the conference final, Quinnipiac took down Yale.

Hockey East's title game featured both the Northeastern and UConn Huskies. Though Northeastern was the one seed, the closure of Northeastern's 115-year-old Matthews Arena forced the game to instead be played at UConn's Toscano Family Ice Forum.

It was a goaltending duel between Tia Chan and Lisa Jonsson that could not be decided in regulation time.

In the second overtime frame, Kyla Josifovic capitalized on a rebound off a Claire Murdoch shot to score and win the title for UConn.

The NPI gap between the two was too large for UConn to overcome with one game, so despite the win Northeastern still earned the final bye.

The NEWHA does not have a ranked team, meaning the winner between Franklin Pierce and St Anslem would bid steal from the 11th team in the NPI. Franklin Pierce claimed this title and punched their first ever tournament bid and the final overall bid to set the field.

Three first round games will be played tomorrow on the sites of the highest seeded team in each regional. Due to avoiding intra-conference matchups, some of the seeding doesn't match NPI.

Even though it doesn't matter because games are played elsewhere, all three "home teams" of the first round hail from Connecticut.

Yale and Minnesota Duluth kick off the action at 6 p.m. for the Ohio State regional in a battle between two Bulldogs. These two teams have never played one another.

Eve Gascon of Duluth and Samson Frey of Yale ranked seventh and tenth in the nation in save percentage, with Yale forwards Jordan Ray and Carina DiAntonio ranking eighth and ninth in points per game.

Duluth's offense is middle-of-the-pack nationally, an anomaly compared to their fellow tournament goers. Their defense does not rank in the top ten, and their comparative lack in both metrics lines them up for struggle.

The second game kicks off an hour later between UConn and Princeton for the Penn State regional. The two hadn't played in ten years before UConn swept a two-game set this past October. Now, they meet again with their seasons on the line.

The two rank fourth and fifth in defense nationally, setting up a game where every goal counts. Chan was the only goalie to finish in the top ten for the Patty Kazmaier award and is undoubtedly the best goalie in the country, meaning that she could steal any given game.

A UConn-Penn State hockey rivalry could be on the horizon if UConn advances, as the schools' men's teams met in the playoffs last year and could do so again.

The Wisconsin regional begins with Franklin Pierce and Quinnipiac at 8 p.m. in yet another first ever matchup.

Franklin Pierce did not play a game against a ranked opponent this season, and as such they head into the tournament as heavy underdogs. Goaltender Jill Hertl's .955 save percentage was the best in the country, making her a potential game changer and the largest source of hope for the Ravens' upset dreams.

Minnesota hosts Northeastern in the only regional with no first round matchup, as these two play in the second round.

Minnesota's Abbey Murphy finished with the best points-per-game nationally, a reflection of Minnesota's second-best offense. With an offense like that, it makes sense that the reason for them only being fourth overall is due to a weaker defense.

Northeastern is more balanced, with the twelfth best offense and seventh best defense. The matchup will be dependent on the ability of Minnesota to score regardless of the brick wall in the opposing net.

The winner of the Minnesota regional plays the winner of the Ohio State regional, while the winner of the Wisconsin regional plays that of the Penn State regional.

The national title game is on March 22. Seven teams look to become first-time champions, while four seek an additional title.



UConn women's hockey forward Claire Murdock versus the Merrimack Warriors at Toscano Family Ice Forum in Storrs, Conn. on Feb. 21, 2026. Murdock, a current fourth semester student, hails from Toronto, Canada. PHOTO BY MADISON HENDRICKS, STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER/THE DAILY CAMPUS

MEN'S COLLEGE HOCKEY TOURNAMENT SEASON

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On most people's minds right now in the college sports world is March Madness. But in addition to the nationally covered basketball phenomenon, the college hockey season is at its peak. Tournaments are winding down, and the field is closer to being set. Thirty-eight teams remain in national title contention, a number that will shrink to 16 over the next two weeks.

Today will see the start of the Big Ten and Hockey East tournaments, the only two tournaments yet to start due to their exclusively single-elimination nature.

Boston University will host Vermont while Merrimack hosts UMass Lowell. Northeastern will host New Hampshire in Boston College's Conte Forum due to the closure of Matthews Arena.

Providence, Massachusetts and UConn are the first three seeds and will await the winners of these games. Providence will play the lowest seeded of the three and UConn will play the highest.

Boston College will host Maine in the second round as the four and five seed.

Providence has an NCAA ticket, with UConn, Massachusetts and Boston College potentially able to get at-large bids. For everybody else, the conference title is the only way.

Michigan hosts Notre Dame, Penn State hosts Minnesota and Wisconsin hosts Ohio State for three other matchups today coming from the Big Ten. The winners will be reseeded alongside Michigan State for the semifinals Saturday.

All of the top four seeds will make the NCAA tournament, while Notre Dame, Minnesota and Ohio State will only qualify with conference wins.

Friday begins the ECAC quarterfinals, which will all be four game sets. Quinnipiac will host Clarkson, Cornell will host Harvard, Dartmouth will host Colgate and Princeton will host Union. The winners will be reseeded for on campus, single-elimination semifinals the following weekend.

Quinnipiac, Dartmouth and Cornell will receive at large bids regardless of outcome.

The AHA semifinals also start on Friday in three-game fashion, with Holy Cross at Bentley and Robert Morris at Sacred Heart.

The AHA does not have any ranked teams, meaning they will bid steal from whatever team finishes 16 in NPI due to the autobid their conference winner will receive.

This also means that the conference tournament is the only way for any of these teams to qualify and a series loss is the end of the season.

Many eyes are on the NCHC Frozen Faceoff, featuring four of the top eight teams in the nation. On Saturday, four teams will faceoff to determine the conference title game the following week in a single-elimination fashion. No. 2 North Dakota hosts No. 8 Minnesota Duluth while No. 4 Western Michigan hosts No. 6 Denver in two incredible games that will culminate in an even better championship game.

The CCHA is where things get interesting in terms of NPI. Augustana will play St. Thomas and Minnesota State will play Michigan Tech in single-game semifinals on Saturday to determine the conference finals.

Why this is more complicated than the other conference comes down to where these teams all slot in NPI. Augustana currently sits at 13 with a solid lead over Massachusetts at 14. St. Thomas sits at 15, Minnesota State at 17 and Michigan Tech at 19, with little difference between teams next to each other from 14 to 21.

Any of the bottom three who loses in the first round is out. Augustana losing would drop them, but their season would become reliant on the results of UMass, UConn, St. Thomas and more.

For whoever makes the final, a win would grant them the autobid. For Augustana, a loss in the title game likely still earns them an at-large bid. For St. Thomas, it comes down to how UMass and UConn do. For Minnesota State, there is still a scenario where they lose in the final and get in if most things go right. And even for Michigan Tech, a finals loss could still result in a tournament bid.

By next week, things will be far more ironed out in terms of who's in and who's out. At most, 28 teams will be alive after the week, and as few as 20 can remain.

All of the conference finals will take place on March 21, and the field will be set and released on March 22.



UMass and UNH men's hockey teams face each other on March 7, 2026. UMass is in contention for this year's national title.
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