



NATIONAL COLLEGIATE HOCKEY CONFERENCE



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Wednesday, April 11, 2018
For Immediate Release

NCHC Unveils 2018-19 Conference Schedule

Ninety-six game slate for the Penrose Cup starts Nov. 2-3 with three series

COLORADO SPRINGS, Colo. – While the 2017-18 season came to a completion only five days ago with a third straight National Collegiate Hockey Conference (NCHC) team winning the national championship, the NCHC is already looking ahead to next season, revealing its 96-game 2018-19 conference schedule Wednesday for its sixth season of competition. All eight NCHC teams will play a 24-game conference slate, culminating in the sixth annual NCHC Frozen Faceoff in Saint Paul, Minn.

The 2018-19 NCAA hockey season officially gets underway Saturday, Oct. 6, but the first conference games don't take place for nearly a month with a trio of NCHC series on Nov. 2-3. The three conference opening-weekend series feature Western Michigan at Denver, St. Cloud State at Colorado College and Miami at Omaha.

The remaining two teams, North Dakota and defending national champion Minnesota Duluth, both commence conference play the following weekend with UND at Miami and UMD hosting Colorado College. That Nov. 9-10 weekend is also the first and only full weekend of conference play with all eight teams in NCHC action prior to the New Year. Also a part of the Nov. 9-10 weekend is the only regular-season series between defending Penrose Cup champion SCSU and 2018 Frozen Faceoff champion Denver as the two collide in St. Cloud.

The last two NCAA national champions meet for the first time Nov. 16-17 when Minnesota Duluth travels to Denver as one of three NCHC series that weekend. Three NCHC series are also set for Nov. 30-Dec. 1 and Dec. 7-8, before heading into the holiday break. All eight NCHC teams will play eight conference games (four series) prior to the December break.

Conference action resumes Jan. 11-12 with the first of four straight weekends that has all eight teams in NCHC play. On the Jan. 11-12 weekend, rivals Miami and Western Michigan collide for the first time in Kalamazoo, while an in-state battle between Minnesota Duluth and St. Cloud State also takes place in Duluth. The following weekend the Gold Pan rivalry resumes with Colorado College and Denver tangling, as well as North Dakota visiting Omaha.

Only four teams have conference games Feb. 8-9 with CC at SCSU and Omaha at Miami, while the following weekend the remaining four teams are the only ones in NCHC action with Denver visiting Minnesota Duluth to complete their season series and UND heading to Western Michigan.

Beginning Feb. 22-23, the final three weekends of the regular season all feature a full slate of conference games. The regular season then concludes March 8-9 with each team facing their protected rival as CC and DU complete the Gold Pan series, Omaha heads to North Dakota, UMD makes the short trek to St. Cloud State and the Broncos travel to Oxford to square off with Miami. Moving forward, each team will always face their protected rival on the final weekend of the regular season to help limit travel prior to the postseason. The NCHC regular-season champion receives the Julie and Spencer Penrose Memorial Cup, which was awarded to St. Cloud State for the second time in 2017-18.

Like in previous seasons, all eight NCHC teams will play five teams, including their protected rival, in both home and away series, while facing the other two teams for just one series (one home and one away). All eight teams will play 12 home and 12 away conference games.

Following the regular season, the NCHC Tournament begins with the best-of-three quarterfinal series March 15-17, 2019 with the top four seeds hosting the bottom four seeds on campus sites. The series winners then advance to Xcel Energy Center for the sixth annual NCHC Frozen Faceoff and second in Saint Paul, which was won by the Pioneers for the second time last season. The semifinals take

place on Friday, March 22, while the third-place game and championship are set for Saturday, March 23. The Frozen Faceoff winner receives an automatic bid to the NCAA Tournament.

All dates listed are subject to change and times are all still to be determined. The television schedule with NCHC nationally and regionally televised games will be unveiled as the season nears. The non-conference portion of the 2018-19 schedule will be added once all NCHC teams announce their own non-conference schedules.

The NCHC is coming off another banner season following its fifth year of competition. Three NCHC teams made the 2018 NCAA Tournament, with Minnesota Duluth winning its second national championship and third straight for the NCHC. The NCHC has now placed 20 teams in the NCAA Tournament and eight teams in the Frozen Four in its five-year history. Four NCHC teams finished the 2017-18 season ranked in the top 20 nationally in the USCHO.com Poll.

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