



Wally Shaver
Marketing and Promotions
15764 Highview Drive
Apple Valley, Minnesota 55124
Phone: 952-432-8939
Fax: 952-953-9026
E-Mail: wshaver14@aol.com



PRESS RELEASE

March 20, 2003 4:00 pm CT

Top Ten Finalists Named for Hobey Baker Award

The Hobey Baker Award is very pleased to announce the top ten finalists for the 2003 award. Each year, the top men's college hockey player in the U.S. is presented the Hobey Baker Award. This group of elite hockey players was determined by a ballot of all 60 Division I college hockey coaches and by a fan vote. The award winner will be announced on Friday, April 11, 2003 at 2:30 pm (EDT) from Buffalo, NY during the NCAA Frozen Four championship tournament. A selection committee of 25 members and fan vote (voteforhobey.com) will determine the winner.

Alphabetically, here are the 2003 Hobey Baker Award Finalists:

Ben Eaves – Boston College – Junior forward – Faribault, Minnesota

The captain of the Eagles has come off an award winning season by garnering Hockey East 1st Team All Star and Co-Player of the Year honors en route to leading Hockey East in scoring with 56 points in 34 games. Eaves, son of Wisconsin Badger head coach Mike, had 18 multiple-point games including a six-point game while averaging almost two points a game.

Christopher Higgins – Yale Univ. – Sophomore forward – Smithtown, New York

Emerging as one of the ECAC's top scoring threats, Higgins recorded 38 points in 25 games, leading the conference with 18 goals. Last season's ECAC Rookie of the Year is 6th in the nation in goals per game and 10th in points per game and is ECAC Co-Player of the Year. Chris skated for the U.S. Junior National Team for the second consecutive year finishing third on the team in points.

Chris Kunitz – Ferris State – Senior forward – Regina, Saskatchewan

For the second straight year and second time in school history, the Bulldogs have a Hobey candidate. Kunitz helped lead Ferris to their first ever CCHA regular season championship by leading the conference in points and in goals for the second straight year. He is a two-time 1st Team All Star posting 19 multiple-point games including 11 multiple-goal games and is 2nd in the nation in scoring with 30 goals and 40 assists in 38 games.

Dave LeNeveu – Cornell Univ. – Sophomore goaltender – Fernie, British Columbia

Two years running now, LeNeveu has had the best goals against record in the nation and his current mark of 1.14 not only leads all goalies in the land by a goal per game, but would be the lowest ever in college hockey history. He has 8 shutouts on the season tying the ECAC record and has set the single season team mark passing the legendary Ken Dryden. He is a 1st Team ECAC All Star and Co-Player of the Year and has stopped over 94% of shots he's faced. LeNeveu leads the nation in goals against average, saves percentage and shutouts.

John-Michael Liles – Michigan State – Senior defenseman – Zionsville, Indiana

On pace to become the first defenseman in Spartan history to lead the team in scoring in consecutive seasons, Liles has posted 45 points in 36 games. A two-time 1st Team CCHA All Star, he is the first player in league history to be named top Offensive Defenseman twice. He currently leads the nation in points per game by a defenseman.

March 20, 2003 4:00 pm CT
Hobey Baker Top Ten (cont'd)

Zach Parise – North Dakota – Freshman forward – Faribault, Minnesota

The only freshman to make this year's top ten, the WCHA Rookie of the Year is currently the nation's highest scoring first year player with 61 points in 37 games. Parise racked up 20 points in his first half dozen college games. He is currently 4th in the nation in points and fifth in goals. The Zack attack was felt in the international arena at the recent World Junior Championships where he led the U.S. team in scoring.

Tom Preissing – Colorado College – Senior defenseman – Rosemount, Minnesota

The WCHA Student Athlete of the Year became only the fifth defenseman in league history to score 20 goals after tallying 17 in his first three years combined. The three-time WCHA All Star is second in the nation in scoring by a defenseman and Tom has been a key cog in the Tiger power play that leads the nation at a 30% clip – his 15 power play goals is second in the nation.

Peter Sejna – Colorado College – Junior forward – Liptovsky Mikulas, Slovakia

WCHA and national scoring leader, Sejna is the only player in college hockey averaging two points per game (77 points in 38). A 1st Team WCHA All Star and the league's Player of the Year, Peter recorded points in all but one game this season. He set a school record with a 31-game scoring streak. Sejna is only the second European player to be a Hobey Baker candidate.

Joe Tallari – Niagara Univ. – Junior forward – Thunder Bay, Ontario

For the first time in Hobey history, a member of College Hockey America (CHA) is a top ten finalist. Tallari led the league in points and goals and is 9th in the nation in points. He is a 1st Team CHA All Star and was selected as the league's Player of the Year. On his way to recording 16 multiple-point games, Joe established several team scoring records.

R. J. Umberger – Ohio State – Junior forward – Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania

The former CCHA Rookie of the Year, had a stellar season posting 25 goals and 52 points to rank second in the CCHA scoring derby. A 1st Team CCHA honoree, R.J. tallied points in 33 of 39 games and bagged 8 game winning goals, second most in the nation. The Buckeyes alternate captain has led the team in scoring two straight years and is 11th in the nation.

The Hobey Hat Trick of three finalists will be announced April 2, 2003 with the winner announcement April 11.

By conference, the CCHA and WCHA both have three candidates, the ECAC has two while Hockey East has one. The CHA has their first ever Hobey finalist. Seven forwards, two defensemen and one goalie comprise the on-ice mix and include six Americans, three Canadians and one from Slovakia.

Visit our websites at: www.voteforhobey.com or www.hobeybaker.com