

WCHA

BRUCE M. McLEOD

Commissioner

CAROL LABELLE

Business Manager

GREG SHEPHERD

Supervisor of Officials

ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICE

2190 South High Street

Denver, CO 80208-0320

Phone: 303 871-4223

Fax: 303 871-2600

DOUG SPENCER

Associate Commissioner

Public Relations

PUBLIC RELATIONS OFFICE

559 D'Onofrio Drive, Ste 103

Madison, WI 53719-2096

Phone: 608 829-0100

Fax: 608 829-0200

email: dspencer@mailbag.com

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December 12, 2000/MADISON, Wisc./For Immediate Release

WCHA Offensive Player of the Week Kelly Popadynetz, C Denver

Kelly Popadynetz, a senior center and alternate captain at the University of Denver, has been honored as the WCHA Offensive Player of the Week for December 12th as a result of his outstanding efforts in a two-game conference road sweep over Alaska Anchorage last weekend.

From Calgary, Alberta, the 5-11, 185-pound Popadynetz led all WCHA players over the Dec. 8-10 weekend slate with six points on three goals and three assists.

In a 5-1 victory over the host Seawolves last Friday (Dec. 8) night in Anchorage, Popadynetz scored two shorthanded goals – of which one was the game-winner – and drew one assist for three points. He then followed that effort with another three-point game last Saturday (Dec. 9), scoring once and setting up two other goals – including the game-winner by Bjorn Engstrom – to lead the Pioneers to a 6-2 win and a sweep of the series.

A member of the WCHA All-Star Team for Norway Tour 2000 last August, Popadynetz also earned a +4 plus/minus rating in the series. On the season, he ranks 11th overall in scoring in the WCHA with 7-11=18 in 16 games.

The two victories extended DU's unbeaten streak to seven games (6-0-1) and moved the Pioneers into fifth place in the WCHA.

Other nominees were: Noah Clarke, C, CC; Matt Ulwelling, F, MTU; Stuart Senden, F, UM; Mark Carlson, W, UMD; Jesse Rooney, F, MSU; and Jeff Panzer, C, UND.

WCHA Defensive Player of the Week Wade Dubielewicz, G Denver

For the second straight week, University of Denver sophomore goaltender Wade Dubielewicz has been selected as the WCHA Defensive Player of the Week (for Dec. 12) after another strong performance in a pair of road victories at Alaska Anchorage.

A 5-10, 178-pounder from Invermere, B.C., Dubielewicz stopped 51 of 54 shots on goal in the series for a .944 saves percentage, allowed just two even-strength goals, and helped hold the host Seawolves to just one power-play goal in 13 man-advantage opportunities.

Last Friday (Dec. 8) night at UAA's Sullivan Arena, Dubielewicz stopped 19 of 20 shots and had two shutout periods in a 5-1 Denver win and then came back on Saturday (Dec. 9) to post 32 saves – including 15 in the second period – to help the Pioneers to a 6-2 win.

Dubielewicz has been instrumental in Denver's current seven-game unbeaten streak (6-0-1), recording a 1.41 goals-against average and a .950 saves percentage during that span. On the 2000-01 season, he ranks third overall among WCHA goaltenders with a 2.18 goals-against average, a .921 saves percentage, and a 6-3-1 record.

Also nominated for the weekly defensive award were: Colin Zulianello, G, CC; Justin Brown, D, MTU; Joe Bourne, D, MSU; Aaron Schneekloth, D, UND; and Graham Melanson, G, UW.

WCHA Rookie of the Week Pat O'Leary, LW North Dakota

University of North Dakota freshman left wing Pat O'Leary, who scored his first two goals in a Dec. 8-9 weekend series at Colorado College, has been named the WCHA Rookie of the Week for December 12th.

A 5-11, 187-pounder from Fargo, North Dakota, O'Leary tallied twice in a 6-4 loss to the host Tigers last Friday (Dec. 8) night in Colorado Springs. He opened the game with his first career goal at 2:59 of the first period to give UND a 1-0 lead and then notched a game-tying unassisted goal at 17:27 of the first that knotted the score at 3-3.

On the season, O'Leary has two goals and one assist for the defending NCAA champion-Fighting Sioux.

North Dakota, which came back to earn a 4-3 overtime victory over Colorado College last Saturday (Dec. 9) night, currently leads the WCHA race by five points and sports a 11-1-1 record over their last 13 games. Overall, the third-ranked Sioux are 13-3-4.

Other nominees for the WCHA Rookie of the Week award for Dec. 12th were: Connor James, F, DU; Justin Brown, D, MTU; Paul Martin, D, UM; and Colin Peters, D, SCSU.