Men’s Hockey Preseason Poll - October 26, 2016

For Immediate Release

Plymouth State Picked to Claim 2016-17 MASCAC Men’s Ice Hockey Championship

Westfield, Mass.— For the second straight season, the Plymouth State Panthers are the early favorite to win the 2016-17 Massachusetts State Collegiate Athletic Conference men’s hockey champions as selected by the seven coaches from around the conference.

The Panthers earned four of the seven first place votes for a total of 34 points. During the 2015-16 season, the team finished 15-2-1 in the conference with a runner-up finish in both the regular season and tournament play. Back on the ice for Plymouth State is reigning MASCAC Rookie of the Year Matt Volonnino who tallied 10 goals and nine assists for 19 points during his first year with the squad. His two game winning goals were tied for seventh best in the conference. 2015-16 Second Team All-Conference honoree Michael Economos also returns. Last season, he netted 13 goals with nine assists for 23 points.

Reigning MASCAC regular season and tournament champions Salem State land in second with 30 points and the final three first place votes. Thee Vikings finished last season with a 16-2 record in league play. The 2015-16 MASCAC Player of the Year Marcus Zelzer is back in goal for the Vikings. He closed out the regular season first in the league in both goals against average (1.76) and save percentage (.932). He also tallied a 16-1 record which was the best winning percentage in the conference at .941 and recorded four shutouts on the year to help his team to an NCAA Tourney bid.

Sitting in third with 25 points is Fitchburg State. The Falcons had a 7-9-2 record last season. In his first year with the team, Nick DiNicola led the Falcons with 24 points on seven goals and 17 assists while goalie Charles Jakobsson was second in save percentage (.922) and third in goals against average (2.73).

Westfield State is in fourth with 21 points. The Owls concluded the 2015-16 regular season with seven MASCAC wins. Colby Daniels is back on the ice for Westfield State after finishing tied for 14th in the MASCAC with 22 points on four goals and 18 assists last season.

Next in fifth place is UMass Dartmouth with 19 points. The Corsairs concluded last season with six victories in league play. Mike Kelly led the team last year in points with 28 points on 10 goals and 18 assists to help UMass Dartmouth earn a spot in the MASCAC tournament.

Closing out the 2016-17 preseason poll are Worcester State and Framingham State in sixth and seventh, respectively. The Lancers claimed nine points in the poll and tallied three wins during the 2015-16 MASCAC campaign. Marcus Mazur returns for the team after leading them in total points with 14 on eight goals and six assists. The Rams earned six points in the poll and had five wins during last year’s conference campaign. Tyler Colacchio had the most goals for the squad during the 2015-16 season with 13 while also assisting on five for a total of 18 points.

Four teams, Fitchburg State, Plymouth State, Westfield State and Worcester State, all hit the ice for their first games of the season this weekend. Follow along with all the games at mascac.com.
The Massachusetts State Collegiate Athletic Conference, the nation’s oldest Division III men’s and women’s playing conference, has a rich and storied tradition of competitive success while celebrating excellence in the classroom. MASCAC member schools include Bridgewater State University, Fitchburg State University, Framingham State University, MCLA, Massachusetts Maritime Academy, Salem State University, Westfield State University and Worcester State University. Two other institutions, the University of Massachusetts Dartmouth and Plymouth State University, are affiliate members of the conference in the sports of football and men’s ice hockey, while Western Connecticut State University joined the conference as an affiliate member in football beginning in 2013.

2016-17 MASCAC Men’s Ice Hockey Pre-Season Coaches Poll
(First Place Votes In Parentheses)

1. Plymouth State (4) 34 points
2. Salem State (3) 33 points
3. Fitchburg State 25 points
4. Westfield State 21 points
5. UMass Dartmouth 19 points
6. Worcester State 9 points
7. Framingham State 6 points