



NCHC Announces Adjusted Postseason Format for 2021

Single-elimination tournament to take place March 12-16 in Grand Forks, N.D.

COLORADO SPRINGS, Colo. – The Frozen Faceoff is getting a temporary new home in 2021. The NCHC’s postseason tournament format, location and dates are changing this year, as the National Collegiate Hockey Conference will hold its championship from March 12-16 in Grand Forks, N.D. The NCHC’s Board of Directors approved the adjustments on Thursday, Feb. 4.

The entire NCHC Tournament, including the Frozen Faceoff, will take place at the University of North Dakota’s Ralph Engelstad Arena and will be a single-elimination format. Quarterfinals will occur on Friday and Saturday, March 12-13, while the semifinals and championship will take place on Monday, March 15 and Tuesday, March 16, respectively. No third-place game will occur.

The top seed in the NCHC Tournament will face the No. 8 seed and the second seed will face the No. 7 seed in the first two quarterfinals on March 12. Seeds 3 and 6, as well as the fourth and fifth seeds, will square off in the other two quarterfinals on March 13. The four quarterfinal winners will then be re-seeded for the semifinals on March 15, with the Frozen Faceoff champion crowned on March 16.

The new 2021 NCHC Tournament format replaces the traditional playoff format the NCHC has used its first seven seasons, which consisted of best-of-three quarterfinal series on campus sites and the Frozen Faceoff at Xcel Energy Center in Saint Paul, Minn. This year’s quarterfinals were scheduled for March 12-14 and the Frozen Faceoff March 19-20. The Conference plans to return to Xcel Energy Center and its traditional playoff format in 2022.

“Due to continued challenges with COVID-19, we are forced to alter the structure and location of the 2021 NCHC Tournament. Circumstances surrounding travel, testing, and fan attendance made the traditional format difficult to complete,” NCHC Commissioner Josh Fenton said. “We are disappointed that we will not be able to culminate the season at Xcel Energy Center, but look forward to bringing one of college hockey’s best tournament experiences back to Saint Paul in 2022.

“We are very grateful to the University of North Dakota and Ralph Engelstad Arena for their willingness to host this unique tournament structure. We look forward to bringing exciting NCHC tournament action to Grand Forks this March!”

All four quarterfinal match-ups will be available on NCHC.tv, while CBS Sports Network will broadcast the Frozen Faceoff semifinals and championship game. All game times are still to be determined.

Fan attendance will be permitted on a limited basis, in accordance with university, local and state health guidelines. Ticket information, including pricing and availability, for the 2021 NCHC Tournament will be announced at a later date.

“We are humbled and appreciative for the opportunity to host the nation’s premier college hockey post-season tournament. I have no doubt that the University of North Dakota, Ralph Engelstad Arena and all our Grand Forks community partners will rally together to make this event a first-class experience for all NCHC student-athletes, coaches and fans,” said Bill Chaves, North Dakota Athletics Director and Chair of the NCHC Athletic Council. “The collaboration and coordination among all eight schools during this incredibly unique year has been extraordinary. The leadership shown by both the member schools’ Presidents and Chancellors, and our Commissioner, has been tremendous. Our goal now is to do our part in concluding the NCHC season in a safe and memorable fashion for all involved.”

Seeding for the NCHC Tournament will be based on the final NCHC regular-season standings. The NCHC regular season is currently scheduled to conclude on Friday, March 5. All eight NCHC teams have already met the threshold of 13 games to qualify for the NCHC Tournament.

Minnesota Duluth is the defending NCHC Frozen Faceoff champion from 2019, after the 2020 NCHC Tournament was cancelled. The winner of the 2021 NCHC Frozen Faceoff will receive an automatic bid to the NCAA Tournament.

2021 NCHC Tournament Dates

Fri., March 12 – First two quarterfinals (No. 1 vs. No. 8 and No. 2 vs. No. 7)

Sat., March 13 – Second two quarterfinals (No. 3 vs. No. 6 and No. 4 vs. No. 5)

Mon., March 15 – Semifinals

Tues., March 16 – Championship Game

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