



## Leading Men

ELITE COACHES GUIDE COLLEGE HOCKEY'S YOUNG TALENT ON AND OFF THE ICE

by JIM CONNELLY

Sometime in the 2012-13 season, legendary Boston College head coach Jerry York should become the all-time winningest head coach in college hockey history.

Now closing in on former Michigan State head coach Ron Mason's career mark of 924 wins, it is conceivable that York could pass Mason before the calendar turns to 2013.

York, in fact, could be the first college hockey coach to reach the once unthinkable 1,000-win plateau. At age 67, York looks and acts more like a man in his young 50s. To think that he could coach for 10 more years if he so chooses doesn't seem like a stretch.

And while York may seem like an aberration in the game, he actually has some company due in no small part to an extremely faithful, skilled group of college hockey coaches.

After New Hampshire head coach Richard 'Dick' Umile's Wildcats defeated St. Cloud State on October 13, Umile became the 21st college head coach to achieve 500 wins. Of those, 11 are active coaches.

Compare that to the National Hockey League. Scotty Bowman is the only coach to ever cross the 1,000-win plateau and only 17 coaches have ever hit the 500-win mark. On that list, just four coaches are still active, suggesting that long-term coaching stints in the NHL can't compare to college hockey.

Ed Olczyk, NHL legend and the lead hockey analyst for the "NHL on NBC," agrees that part of the reason that college breeds long-term coaches who gain the status of "legend" has to do with the end expectations.

"Every school's definition of success is a little different and you have to look at the level of success that each school has had," said Olczyk, who had two sons playing college hockey, one at UMass and the other at Penn State. "You're not going to win every year, but if you're in the hunt and you're always at the top five in recruiting, you earn that right to stay as long as you want."

### PART OF THE TRADITION

Great coaches with long-term careers are nothing new to college hockey. Names like

Ralph "Cooney" Weiland, John "Snooks" Kelley, John MacInnes and Jack Riley roll off the tongues of many older fans.

York played for Snooks Kelley before beginning his 41-year career at Clarkson, Bowling Green and now BC. Boston University head coach Jack Parker, who is less than 50 wins behind York, played his college hockey for well-known BU head coach Jack Kelly. Now in his 29th season at Michigan, Red Berenson played his college hockey for Al Renfrew, who himself coached 22 years.

All of those three now coach at their alma mater. According to Dave Starman, college hockey analyst for CBS Sports Network and a scout for the Toronto Maple Leafs, the comforts of home often play a big role in maintain coaching stability in a college program.

"You hear people say it all the time that some of the best days of your life were spent in college," said Starman. "So for many of the great coaches, it's about being at the alma mater. They're spending their career where they spent some of the best years of their lives."

A season ago, a number of first-year coaches entered the game with immediate success. UMass Lowell's Norm Bazin led his River Hawks to the NCAA tournament for the first time since 1996. One better, Union's Rick Bennett took over the helm and brought the Dutchmen to the team's first Frozen Four.

The energy and innovations up-and-coming coaches bring to college hockey help maintain the sport's level of success – and push the veterans to continue to excel.

### UNDERSTANDING THE "STUDENT-ATHLETE"

One major difference between college hockey and other levels is the coach's responsibility to build more than just a player. The mentality that a coach needs to teach these players beyond on-ice skills is something that is often critically important to their overall mission.

"Coaches are teachers, and I don't care what anyone says," said

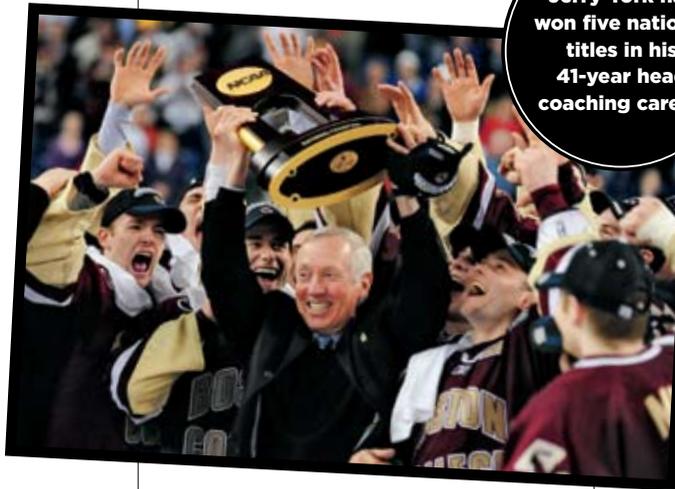
Olczyk. "They [become coaches] with the mentality that 'I want to teach the game.'

"Philosophy has a lot to do with it. To me it's the understanding of who and what you are and looking at the big picture," Olczyk added. "It's looking at the long story and trying to build for that. That's a pretty consistent message throughout college hockey: every day is important but for the most part it's trying to develop these people beyond hockey players. You're going there for the big picture of student-athletes."

Starman agrees that building a young person's future has a major impact on the sense of accomplishment of a college hockey coach.

"It's two different philosophies," said Starman. "At the NHL level, wins and losses translate to dollars and cents. It just seems to me that at the college hockey level, the most important thing is running a good program, making sure your building is full and making sure your kids graduate. There's a sense of accomplishment in developing young athletes and young players and developing the brand for your school." ■

**Jerry York has won five national titles in his 41-year head coaching career.**



### RISING STARS IN THE COACHING RANKS

While college hockey certain has its coaching legends, in recent years an entirely new generation of young coaches have burst onto the spotlight. At just 40 years old, Miami head coach Enrico Blasi, currently in his 14th season, has already recorded 289 wins. Also in his early 40s, Quinnipiac head coach Rand Pecknold has already amassed 340 victories.

# Social Studies

THE RISE OF TWITTER GIVES FANS AND PROSPECTIVE PLAYERS AN INSIDE LOOK AT COLLEGE HOCKEY

Just as social media has given the general public unprecedented insight into the lives of Justin Bieber and Lady Gaga, to name Twitter's most-followed entertainers, it also offers a behind-the-scenes look at college hockey players and coaches.

Dozens of coaches and hundreds of players regularly post on Twitter, sharing thoughts with fans and potential recruits – and often responding to them. College Hockey, Inc. maintains lists of each of those groups (and more, see below) to make them easy to find.

The tweets offer a mix of humor, pregame intensity, inspiration, and appreciation for family, friends and fans. Additions of photos via twitpic or Instagram add another element as well.

Much like behind-the-scenes 24/7-style television shows and web series, social media

offers a new way for outsiders to see college programs in an entirely different perspective. For a prospective player – who may be trying to picture himself in that locker room in the future – it can be invaluable.

Coaches consistently advise that prospective players learn whatever they can about a school – just as coaches are trying to find the right players for their program, they want recruits to find the right fit for them as well.

“It’s important that prospective players hear more than what the coach tells them or what they see on a recruiting video,” said Massachusetts head coach John Micheletto, also active on Twitter (@CoachMicheletto). “The players in the program and at the school can give them the most accurate look at what it’s like to go to school there.”

Tyler Elbrecht, captain at Minnesota State, tweets at @Elbrecht16 and often provides that kind of insight.

“Do coaches look at a bus of sleeping players,” he wondered in one tweet, “and think to themselves, ‘We could for sure mess with these guys?’”

Players were generally quicker to adopt to Twitter than their coaches, but more and more of the bench bosses are signing up. A recent count showed 10 head coaches tweeting, with about twice as many assistant coaches on board. As coaches see that potential players are on Twitter, it’s like a successful showcase tournament – they want to be there, too.

“If you’re not involved, you’re missing a large group of people to engage with,” said Robert Morris head coach Derek Schooley (@derekschooley). “Social media is here, so embrace it. I enjoy the fact that you can interact with people and use it as another way to promote your program.” ■

**Chris Kreider won the 2012 NCAA championship at Boston College and was in the New York Rangers’ lineup a week later.**



## TOP TWEETERS

Our picks for the top players or coaches on social media in each conference:

### ATLANTIC HOCKEY

Derek Schooley, Robert Morris  
@derekschooley

The Colonials’ coach gives a candid look inside his program, which is the host school for this year’s Frozen Four.

### CCHA

Danny DeKeyser, Western Michigan  
@DeKeyser5

Highly entertaining offerings from one of college hockey’s top NHL free agents.

### ECAC HOCKEY

Greg Carey, St. Lawrence  
@GregCarey10

A decidedly Canadian look at life with the Skating Saints.

### HOCKEY EAST

Nick Pryor, Maine @nickpryor71  
On a team of good tweeters, his is the most entertaining feed.

### WCHA

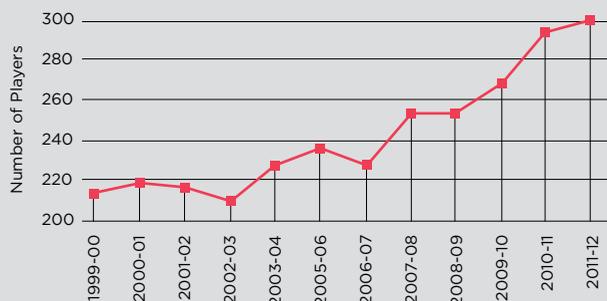
Tyler Elbrecht, Minnesota State  
@Elbrecht16

The Mavericks’ captain gives behind-the-scenes glimpses plus a dose of motivation.

### FOLLOW ALONG

College Hockey, Inc.’s twitter page, @collegehockey, includes lists that allow you to follow the following groups: College Coaches, Current College Players, Former College Players, College Hockey Media

## What’s behind the record 301 NCAA alums who played in the NHL last year?



Former U.S. College Hockey Players in the NHL

**47** players made their NHL debut, 8 of them after the end of their college season

The number of college alums in the NHL has grown 43% in eight years

**74%** played at least three years of college hockey; more than half played four

**45** colleges had at least one alum in the NHL, led by: Michigan – 23  
Boston College – 22  
Wisconsin – 22

93 defensemen, 184 forwards, 23 goaltenders

**101** were first- or second-round picks, 84 were undrafted free agents

# Building Success

NEW AND RENOVATED ARENAS SHOW SCHOOLS' COMMITMENT TO PLAYER DEVELOPMENT

**W**ith more than a dozen new arenas built in the last 15 years and many more renovated, college hockey programs have gone to great lengths to ensure that their players are spending time, developing and playing in state-of-the-art environments.

That commitment continues with new construction underway at Penn State and RIT, a new building planned at Nebraska-Omaha, plus major renovations at several arenas, including Connecticut, Harvard, UMass Lowell, Merrimack, Michigan, Providence and St. Cloud State.

"When we built our arena 20 years ago it was the envy of most around the country," said St. Cloud State head coach Bob Motzko, where the National Hockey Center is in the midst of a two-year renovation. "In the time since then we have fallen behind a bit, and we needed to make some updates."

Schools have found these updates to be important to improve the fan experience in the stands and create an awe factor for recruits. But the biggest impact, at least for players, come in the state-of-the-art development facilities in these upgraded arenas.

Spacious weight rooms, training rooms with hot and cold tubs and video classrooms are among the areas designed to help players improve their games. Some rinks even include off-ice shooting areas or indoor sprinting tracks to further the focus on development.

"When we planned the team space, we put a lot of emphasis on player development," Notre Dame head coach Jeff Jackson said. "We have a weight room, a cardio room,

rehab and medical facilities, a team meeting room. We've got shooting bays so that guys can come in and work on their shooting on or off the ice, even jumping in there between classes. College hockey has grown and grown in regards to facilities, and our building is one that not only our fans can enjoy and be proud of but our players as well."

Wisconsin recently completed work on the LaBahn Arena, a facility that will house the Badgers women's team's games and serve as a practice rink for the men's program. The men will continue to play at the 15,237-seat Kohl Center, but will spend Sunday through Thursday at LaBahn. Their space there features spacious locker rooms, equipment and sports medicine facilities and an underground connection to the Kohl Center.

Schools like Wisconsin hope that the investment they make in their facilities pays off on the ice. First, they hope that potential recruits are impressed. Once they are on campus, they hope that the training facilities help players develop into the best hockey players they can be.

"We are really proud of our Shawn Walsh Hockey Center, which was completed in 2005," said Maine head coach Tim Whitehead. "It's a great facility. It's the perfect environment for our guys to buckle down and make whatever improvements they can off the ice, then when they get on the ice you can see what a difference it makes."

As each of these new or renovated arenas open their doors, it's clear that the biggest beneficiaries are the players who will spend so much of their time in college at the rink.

"There are a few things in there that the hockey players are going to say, 'Wow, what a great idea. I haven't seen that before,'" said Penn State head coach Guy Gadowsky, whose team will open the Pegula Ice Arena next fall. "I really look forward to, when it's complete, watching the players as they walk in the first time." ■



**The Miami locker room, Northeastern's weight room, and the planned Polisseni Center at RIT are just three examples of state-of-the-art facilities in Division I.**

## NEW ARENAS SINCE 1998

### 1998

Kohl Center (Wisconsin)  
 RMU Island Sports Center (Robert Morris)  
 Tsongas Center (UMass Lowell)  
 Value City Arena (Ohio State)

### 1999

Berry Events Center (Northern Michigan)

### 2001

Ralph Engelstad Arena (North Dakota)

### 2003

CenturyLink Center (Nebraska-Omaha)

### 2005

Agganis Arena (Boston University)

### 2006

Goggin Ice Arena (Miami University)

### 2007

TD Bank Sports Center (Quinnipiac)

### 2010

Amsöil Arena (Minnesota Duluth)  
 Sanford Center (Bemidji State)

### 2011

Compton Family Ice Arena (Notre Dame)

### 2013 (scheduled)

Pegula Ice Arena (Penn State)  
 Gene Polisseni Center (RIT)

# Ten Tips to Get Recruited

LANDING A SPOT ON A COLLEGE HOCKEY TEAM TAKES MORE THAN JUST ON-ICE TALENT

It's incredibly hard to make an NCAA Division I hockey team, and the deciding factor in landing one of those coveted positions typically comes down to your hockey ability. That said, there are a number of things young players and parents can do to catch the eye – and the interest – of college recruiters.

Here are 10 ways you can help your cause at the rink, in the classroom and beyond:

## 1 BE PROACTIVE

College coaches are limited in when and how often they can contact recruits, and they can't reach out to a player until after his 10th grade year. Players, however, can contact coaches at any time. It can help to let a school know that you are interested with a reminder of where they can see you play.

## 2 BE STUDIOUS

The better your grades and standardized test scores, the more options you will have. Only 59 schools offer Division I men's hockey – you don't want to narrow your field further because your marks aren't up to par.

## 3 BE AWARE OF ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS

Two key elements are part of determining a student-athlete's NCAA eligibility: their academic achievement and their amateur status. Review the requirements at [eligibilitycenter.org](http://eligibilitycenter.org) to understand what classes and standardized test you need to take. Don't jeopardize your amateur status by signing a CHL contract or playing in a game.

## 4 BE A CHARACTER PLAYER

Coaches constantly have to make tough recruiting decisions between equally talented players. What often breaks the tie is what they can see of a players' character in a game. Is he a good teammate? How does he respond to a bad shift, or a bad call? Always assume that someone's watching you – they probably are.

## 5 BE COMMITTED TO IMPROVING

Many young players get wrapped up in playing every showcase event that they can. Coaches recognize, however, that development comes in practice, not games. Instead of signing up for every showcase, spend time working on a part of your game that

has room for improvement – then show off those skills when you are back in the spotlight.

## 6 BE CONSISTENT

Colleges have three coaches each who can watch recruits – they don't employ scouts. Therefore, they can't be at every game and they may see you on an off night. Do your best to give a consistent effort and rest assured, they see recruits multiple times before making any decisions.

## 7 BE OUR GUEST

The best way to find out whether a school is right for you is to take what's called an unofficial visit (official visits are paid for by the school and only available once you are in 12th grade). An unofficial visit can allow you to see the campus, tour the facilities and even take in a game. Reach out to the coaching staff

fessors and others around their program.

## 9 BE A SUPPORTIVE PARENT

Never forgotten in this process are the parents and their significant role. It shouldn't be too significant, however. Your son should be the one writing letters and reaching out to coaches. Coaches want to know that it's the player's ambition, not their parents'. Be supportive but not overbearing – coaches have to be sure they want you in their program for four years as well.

## 10 BE PATIENT

The last – and often hardest – piece of advice is to be patient. The recruiting process takes time, and prospective student-athletes can commit to schools anywhere from 15 years old to 21. Don't get frustrated if you aren't one of those select few who

Coaches like Dave Shyiak at Alaska Anchorage want to find players who are committed and show character on and off the ice.



before you go and let them know you'll be on campus.

## 8 BE INQUISITIVE

As much as coaches want to find the right fits for their programs, they want to be sure their recruits are comfortable where they end up as well. They want to hear recruits asking questions – insightful questions – of the coaching staff, players, pro-

get an offer while playing minor midget hockey. Follow these other nine steps and the recruiting process can be a rewarding, exciting experience.

Prospective players can find more resources and information about NCAA hockey on our web site, [collegehockeyinc.com](http://collegehockeyinc.com), and by signing up for our email newsletter. You can also follow us on Twitter (@collegehockey) and Like us on Facebook. ■