

# COLLEGE ICINGS

By Albert I. Clarke

It’s that time of year again for the college hockey campaign in Greater Boston—though the calendar reads 2025, the spirit harkens back to those hardy winters when a fledgling four-team tournament first captured the fancy of local fans. The name “Beanpot,” once met with no small measure of skepticism, has since woven itself into the very fabric of our grand pastime. Now, as Boston College, Boston University, Harvard, and Northeastern convene for another chapter of spirited competition, the excitement in the old rinks is palpable.

The greatest wonder of this tournament lies not solely in its storied name, but in the remarkable balance among these four proud sextets. Each bears a legacy of skillful forwards, stalwart defensemen, and an unyielding netminder eager to carry his colors to victory. Those who recall the early days may find it amusing that the notion of an annual February showdown once seemed mere fancy. Yet here we stand, with the promise of splendid match-ups and the knowledge that the victor must truly earn every inch of ice.

So gather, hockey faithful, and observe with keen anticipation as the puck drops and the echoes of sharpened blades resound in this, the latest installment of a tournament long cherished and fiercely contested. Indeed, despite the changing times, the fervor remains: a goal, a shift in momentum, a last-minute rally—these shall forever draw the crowd to the edge of their seats. And through it all, this proud little pot, once an afterthought of a nickname, continues to hold the heart and soul of college hockey in the city of Boston.

## HARVARD

Guided by Coach Ted Donato and his long service behind the Crimson bench, Harvard brings a 7-11-2 record into tournament play. Though their path has been marked by trials—including a recent 4-3 overtime setback to Princeton—Harvard supporters find solace in the skill and fortitude shown by the squad amid such tribulations. More than once this season, the Crimson have rattled the opposition with swift, incisive play, only to see fate favor the other side in the closing moments.

Still, the storied halls of Cambridge echo with the knowledge that, come Beanpot time, a strong showing can rewrite the narrative in a single week. Amid the winter winds sweeping down the Charles, the Crimson’s faithful point to an improving offense, including the likes of Ben MacDonald and Cam Johnson, each making their mark on the scoresheet of late. With Harvard’s tradition-laden program searching for a spark, this grand old tournament may be just the stage for a rousing resurgence. After all, in Boston’s annual February drama, each cast member stands poised to steal the show.

## BOSTON

Under the stewardship of Coach Jay Pandolfo, whose tenure behind the bench has produced a most respectable 71-30-3 mark, the Terriers from Commonwealth Avenue have carved out a proud niche in college hockey this season. Their 14-9-1 record, while not unblemished, speaks to a team eager to battle from the first drop of the puck. As do the squad’s penalty numbers. Throughout the winter, the press has lauded their offensive bursts, sparked by a handful of youthful forwards who are all too ready to pounce upon any lapse in their rivals’ defenses.

Yet, it has not been a path free of setbacks. After a sweep suffered in the Battle of Comm Ave just weeks ago Boston University can ill afford complacency as they prepare for the Beanpot fray. Still, Coach Pandolfo’s charges display a spirited resilience, turning each challenge into a lesson learned. With a robust conference showing of 10-5-1 in Hockey East, the Terriers have signaled their intention to stand toe-to-toe with all comers. Do not be surprised if their determined style and balanced lines see them contend deep into the tournament’s final hours.

## NORTHEASTERN

Coach Jerry Keefe’s Huskies may sport a 9-12-3 ledger, but those who have watched them in recent weeks maintain that this is a squad brimming with potential yet to be fully tapped. Against higher-ranked foes, Northeastern has shown flashes of brilliance—tenacious defense, timely scoring, and steadfast goaltending reminiscent of the old days. Though they fell, 3-1, in a dogged effort against the mighty Maine Black Bears last week, the Huskies demonstrated no shortage of gumption, forging a 1-1 tie for much of the middle stanza before fate went against them late.

Now, as February’s frosts descend upon the city, Coach Keefe and his men will look to harness that same resolve for the storied Beanpot. Sophomore Cameron Whitehead has earned praise for his valiant netminding, turning aside shot after shot with aplomb. Meanwhile, the Huskies’ leadership core, led by juniors unafraid to block pucks or unleash double-digit shots on goal, embraces the belief that a new page in their history is ready to be written. Underdogs they may seem, but those who underestimate this Matthews Arena sextet do so at their own peril.

## BOSTON

Sitting atop the standings with a formidable 19-4-1 record, Greg Brown’s Eagles have soared to national prominence, leaving many an opponent in their wake. Coach Brown, himself a proud alumnus of the Heights, has guided the Maroon and Gold to a sparkling 67-26-8 overall mark in his tenure, and the press fairly buzzes with talk of the Eagles’ potent mix of youthful fire and seasoned discipline. Their 12-3-1 clip in Hockey East underscores that, should they falter, it is rarely for long, as each stumble only steels their resolve.

# T D G A R D E N

## GREATER BOSTON INTERCOLLEGIATE HOCKEY TOURNAMENT

(AKA) THE DUNKIN’ BEANPOT

MONDAY, FEBRUARY 3, 2025

5 P.M.

## HARVARD vs. BOSTON UNIV.

8 P.M.

## BOSTON COLLEGE vs. NORTHEASTERN

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MONDAY, FEBRUARY 10, 2025

4:30 P.M.

## *Consolation Game*

7:30 P.M.

## Tournament Championship Game

Priceless