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Gai Ingham Berlage

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The Development of Intercollegiate Women's Ice Hockey in the United States

By GAI INGHAM BERLAGE

MENTION ICE HOCKEY and the first thought that flashes through most people's minds is that of a violent men's sport. There are images of men in protective pads and helmets streaking down the ice, chasing a little black puck traveling at lightning speed. There's the sight of men's bodies colliding as they are checked into the boards or thrown on the ice. There's the sound of fans cheering wildly at fights, and the crowd booing the referees for penalty calls.

There is nothing feminine about these images and the public, on the whole, doesn't associate ice hockey with women players. Yet since the 1970s women at colleges in the northeastern part of the United States have been playing intercollegiate ice hockey. These teams are part of the ECAC (Eastern Collegiate Athletic Conference) which sponsors the only intercollegiate women's ice hockey league in the United States. The league originated in the 1970s under the aegis of the EAIAW (Eastern Association of Intercollegiate Athletics for Women). As of the 1994-1995 season, the NCAA (National Collegiate Athletic Association) has recognized women's ice hockey as an emerging college sport. In order to gain that recognition at least forty institutions had to sponsor teams. Currently there are forty-one varsity and club teams. However, the majority of the public, especially those living outside of the northeast, are unaware of the existence of women's intercollegiate ice hockey.

The first women's intercollegiate ice hockey tournament was sponsored by the EAIAW in 1979 and tournaments continued to be held under their aegis until 1983. In 1984 the EAIAW dissolved and the ECAC became the governing body for both men's and women's teams. The ECAC had been the governing body for men's sports since 1938. Under the ECAC the women's ice hockey has continued to grow. This season, 1995-1996, there are twelve teams in the ECAC Division I League (Boston College, Brown University, Colby College, Cornell University, Dartmouth College, Harvard University, University of New Hampshire, Northeastern University, Princeton University, Providence College, St. Lawrence University, Yale University) and eleven teams in the newly formed ECAC Alliance. The Alliance is divided into East and West and contains both varsity and club teams. The East contains teams from Amherst College, Bowdoin College, University of
Maine, Wesleyan University, and Williams College. The West contains teams from Colgate University, Hamilton College, Middlebury College, Rensselaer, Rochester Institute of Technology and the University of Vermont. There are also eighteen club teams throughout the United States that are not affiliated with the ECAC. See Table 1 for a listing of dates of formation of original ECAC affiliated teams.

### TABLE 1
FORMATION OF ORIGINAL ECAC DIVISION I TEAMS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>IVY LEAGUE TEAMS</th>
<th>NON-IVY LEAGUE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Brown University*</td>
<td>Providence College</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cornell University</td>
<td>U. of New Hampshire</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Princeton University</td>
<td>Northeastern U.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dartmouth College</td>
<td>1975</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yale University</td>
<td>1977</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Harvard University</td>
<td>1977</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Pembroke College

Note: Colby College, St. Lawrence University and Rochester Institute of Technology (RIT) became part of ECAC Division I in 1993. When RIT opted to become part of the newly formed ECAC Alliance in 1995, Boston College joined ECAC Division I.

In tracing the development of women's intercollegiate ice hockey in the United States four questions emerge. One, why did the northeastern part of the United States produce the first and currently only women's intercollegiate ice hockey league? Two, why didn't the first league start in traditional hockey strongholds such as Minnesota or Wisconsin? Three, why did women's teams form at traditionally all-male schools such as Yale, Harvard, Princeton and Dartmouth rather than at women's colleges such as Smith and Mount Holyoke? Four, of the myriad of sports available to women, why did ice hockey, a sport traditionally associated with men, become an intercollegiate women's sport?

The convergence of three historical events operated to provide opportunities for the creation of women's ice hockey programs at traditionally men's colleges in the northeast. These events were the women's liberation movement of the 1960s, the movement to make traditionally male Ivy League schools such as Harvard and Yale coeducational, and the passage of Title IX of the Education Act of 1972.

The women's liberation movement of the 1960s challenged the traditional image of femininity in which women were seen as the "weaker sex" dependent upon men. Betty Friedan and others championed the idea that women were men's equals and should have equal opportunities to participate in all aspects of American life. They should be free to pursue careers in business, politics and sports. The ideology of equality was reinforced by court rulings...
to end discrimination of women in the public domain.

During the late 1960s and 1970s sporting opportunities for women blossomed. Boutilier and SanGiovanni in their history of women in sport refer to this period as “The Female Athletic Revolution.” Kathy Switzer symbolized this revolution when in 1967 she illegally competed in the Boston Marathon, until then a male event. In the 1970s tennis star Billie Jean King became a crusader for women’s tennis rights. She organized a boycott of the Pacific Southwest Tennis Championships to protest the differences in prize money given to men and women. When the United States Lawn Tennis Association (USLTA) refused to make the prize money more equitable, she helped to establish the Virginia Slims tournaments which became highly successful. Because of her efforts, in 1973 the USLTA offered equal prize money for men and women at the U.S. Open. In 1973 she helped to form the Women’s Tennis Association and in 1974 was instrumental in helping to create the Women’s Sport Foundation and the magazine womenSports. But probably what the public remembers her best for is when she beat Bobbie Riggs in a tennis match billed as “The Battle of the Sexes” played in the Houston Astrodome which was viewed by 40,000,000 TV viewers. King’s victory symbolized woman’s ability to compete athletically.

The passage of Title IX of the Education Act in 1972 provided the legal muscle for change in women’s intercollegiate sport. Title IX stated, “No person in the United States shall be excluded from participation in . . . any education program or activity receiving federal financial assistance . . . .” In order to comply with Title IX so as not to lose federal funding, colleges and universities were obliged to offer intercollegiate sports for women. The number of women competing in intercollegiate sports expanded from 16,000 in 1972 to 158,000 in 1990.

The traditional male Ivy League schools became coeducational institutions right around the time of the passage of Title IX. Princeton was the first to admit women in 1969. The rest followed shortly thereafter: Yale, for example, in 1970 and Dartmouth in 1972. This meant that the Ivy League schools all had a common goal to establish women’s sports programs. Money was allocated and the schools needed to decide which women’s sports to sponsor. The Ivy League conference was already in place. If women wanted to play ice hockey the facilities were there and money was available. To establish ice hockey programs at coeducational schools, on the other hand, was a more difficult proposition. At coeducational institutions women’s sports programs were already established and conference schedules were in place. There was also little incentive to establish women’s ice hock-

ey as a varsity sport since it was not NCAA (National Collegiate Athletic Association) sanctioned or prior to that AIAW (Association of Intercollegiate Athletics for Women) sanctioned as were sports such as women’s basketball and softball. Money that was available for women’s sports was already allocated to established programs. Even if one school decided to offer women’s ice hockey, if other schools didn’t initiate programs there would be no competition. Even at schools such as the University of Minnesota and the University of Wisconsin, with strong traditions of men’s hockey, women’s ice hockey suffered from a lack of college administrative and athletic department support and financial backing. Some women hockey enthusiasts at the University of Wisconsin formed an ice hockey club team in 1973. Club women’s ice hockey was also started at the University of Minnesota. So, it was not lack of interest on the part of female students but rather lack of administrative support that prevented women’s ice hockey from developing into an intercollegiate sport. Women’s ice hockey is still not an intercollegiate sport in Wisconsin and Minnesota even though girls’ ice hockey is a popular sport. In 1994 the Minnesota Girls’ and Women’s Hockey Association had forty senior teams and forty youth teams.

Interestingly enough although intercollegiate ice hockey started in the northeast, there was no pool of women ice hockey players. Youth and high-school programs were for boys. The majority of the women on the first Ivy League teams started out as figure skaters. But that pattern changed when many of the New England male boarding schools became coed in the 1970s and developed girls’ ice hockey programs. A large number of the women on the United States women’s ice hockey teams that competed in the International Ice Hockey Federation World Championships in 1990, 1992 and 1994 had played at traditionally male eastern colleges such as Princeton, Dartmouth, Harvard and Providence and had begun their hockey careers at traditionally male boarding schools such as Hotchkiss, Taft, St. Paul’s and Exeter.

What is ironic is that women’s intercollegiate ice hockey started at traditionally male colleges and not at women’s colleges where women had played ice hockey as early as the 1890s. Today, women’s colleges such as Wellesley, Smith and Mt. Holyoke have no ice hockey teams. Prior to the 1920s and 1930s, physical educators at these schools had allowed women to play team sports as long as the competition was low-key and open to all. Women at Mt. Holyoke as early as the 1890s and at Smith from 1910 to at least 1931 played intramural ice hockey.

It was basketball, which was introduced in 1892 at Smith College, that


6. An 1896 picture of Mt. Holyoke women with hockey sticks skating on Rinkle Rink is in Doris S. Ainsworth, *The History of Physical Education in Colleges for Women* (New York: A.S. Barnes, 1930), p. 78. The date under the picture is incorrectly given as 1895. Although the rink was donated in 1895, the construction was not completed until January 1896 according to Mount Holyoke archive records.

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became the catalyst for eliminating women’s competitive sports on college campuses. Once introduced, basketball became a popular and highly competitive sport. Pressure from students to make it an intercollegiate sport brought opposition from physical education instructors. The female instructors worried that women’s sports would become highly competitive and elitist like men’s. They feared that the excessive emphasis on winning that was typical of men’s sports would lead to the corruption of women’s sports. To these women educators, women’s sports should be based on a woman’s model of universal participation, comradery and physical health. By the 1920s women physical educators were unanimous in their opposition to intercollegiate sports for women. In 1923 the Women’s Division of the National Amateur Athletic Federation was formed. A platform of resolutions was established for governing female athletics. Basically, they called for programs that would stress universal participation and physical fitness—individual records and championships were to be discouraged. The platform proposed by the educators was adopted at the Conference on Athletics and Physical Recreation for Women and Girls, April 6-7, 1923. Its acceptance meant the elimination of intercollegiate athletics and marked the end of competitive sports for women on most college campuses. For women’s colleges such as Smith and Wellesley this ban continued until the late 1960s.

At women’s colleges the physical education department had complete control over all sports programs whether instructional or competitive. There was no separate athletic department in charge of intercollegiate sports as was the case at men’s schools. Without an intercollegiate athletic tradition and with many female educators convinced that women should reject the male model of sports competition for a women’s model that stressed limited competition, it was more difficult to introduce a sport such as ice hockey. Ice hockey epitomized what some female educators saw as the evils of the male sports model. It was aggressive, violent and commercial. Many of these female educators believed that male “student/athletes” were exploited. They believed that the male competitive intercollegiate model would be detrimental to women and result in the corruption of women’s sports. In 1971 women physical education faculty joined together to form the Association for Intercollegiate Athletics for Women (AIAW) to challenge the male-dominat-


9. Physical educators were successful in limiting athletic competition for middle-class college women, but upper-class women and working-class women were largely unaffected. The upper-class women had their private country clubs and the working-class women, community athletic clubs and industrial leagues. See Susan Cahn, Coming on Strong: Gender and Sexuality in Twentieth-Century Women’s Sport (New York: The Free Press, 1994), p. 30.
ed National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA). The AIAW women’s model focused on the woman athlete in her primary role as college student. Athletic programs were important only for their educational value. The AIAW initially opposed national championships and athletic scholarships for women.10

In the 1970s neither physical educators nor students at women’s colleges such as Smith and Mt. Holyoke were interested in starting a women’s ice hockey program. The women had grown up identifying with figure skating and not ice hockey. It is highly doubtful that any of the women were even aware that women at these colleges had ever played ice hockey. There were no indoor rinks, and skating on Paradise Pond at Smith was totally dependent on the weather. Ice hockey was not part of college life on these campuses the way it was on men’s campuses.

At Ivy League schools such as Yale and Harvard, men’s ice hockey has a long history and is one of the most popular spectator sports. Hockey games are well attended and there is intense rivalry among the schools. Winning the Ivy League ice hockey title confers prestige. That tradition was absent from the women’s campuses. Even if the women at the women’s colleges had been interested in playing ice hockey without indoor rink facilities the program start-up costs would have been prohibitive.

This was not the case with women’s colleges that were affiliated with men’s colleges. In 1963, Pembroke, the women’s college affiliated with Brown University, established the first women’s ice hockey college program in the United States. In 1973, two years after Pembroke and Brown officially became one institution, the Brown University athletic department granted varsity status to the women’s ice hockey team.

On every campus that has a women’s varsity ice program with the exception of Yale University, the program started as a club sport with little or no financial backing from the college. Pembroke is a good case in point. In 1963 Arlene Groton, a physical education teacher at Pembroke, was approached by several female students asking for help in getting school sponsorship to start a team. Groton became the driving force for the establishment of the team.

Groton says she will never forget that first practice. Most of the girls came to play in figure skates with field hockey shin guards strapped over their jeans. Eventually, a local company donated peewee (junior) ice hockey equipment. Some of the women tried to scrunch into child-size pads; others opted for wads of newspaper. Their uniforms were quite a contrast to the men’s varsity team. But uniforms were not their only problem. There were no other women’s teams to play. So Pembroke’s first season, 1963-1964, consisted of several practices with the Brown men’s team, a pick-up game against assorted faculty and spouses, and one game against a Rhode Island
men's club. For the next couple of years they were able to play the Walpole Brooms, a women's community team in Massachusetts. When the team disbanded in 1966, they again found themselves with no other American women's team to play. In 1967 the team travelled to Canada to play a women's team at Queens College in Kingston, Ontario. Since United States women's hockey doesn't allow checking and Canadian rules do, the women had to adjust their game. In 1969 the team had developed enough skills to play in a Canadian women's ice hockey tournament against Loyola, Queens and McGill.

It wasn't until 1970 that Cornell, one of the oldest coeducational universities in the United States and part of the Ivy League, fielded the second women's ice hockey team. Again it was an informal club arrangement with the women coaching themselves. The team was started at an auspicious time. In 1971 the New York State Association of Intercollegiate Athletics for Women and the Association for Intercollegiate Athletics for Women were formed. Both organizations were advocates for women's sports and for women's tournaments. The presence of these two organizations and the passage of Title IX in 1972 transformed women's sports at Cornell. The traditional Sports Days of the 1960s, where several teams competed with various other colleges, gave way in the 1970s to a comprehensive intercollegiate sports program patterned after the men's. For the female physical education teachers who also served as coaches this was to spell disaster as male coaches often replaced them as coaches of varsity teams. This was especially true in nontraditional female sports such as ice hockey.

The second season, 1971-1972, two former Cornell men's hockey stars were recruited as volunteer coaches. John Duthie, class of 1971, became the head coach and John Hughes, class of 1970, the assistant coach. Hughes had been an All-American and captain of the 1970 NCAA champion team. The two provided the coaching basis for what was to become an Eastern powerhouse. Hughes coached for the three years he attended Cornell Law School and then Duthie became the full-time paid coach of the team until 1984. From 1976 to 1980 Cornell reigned as the Ivy League women's ice hockey champion. In 1981 after tying with Brown their streak ended. By that time other Ivy League schools had developed competitive teams.

In 1973 Providence College established the third women's team. Providence College until 1971 had been a private Catholic men's college. The men's hockey team was always a strong contender in the Hockey East Conference. When the first women were admitted David Gavitt, the athletic director, and Helen Bert, the assistant director, worked to establish a women's athletic program that would be a balance of varsity, intramural and recreational sports for women. In 1973-1974 the decision was made to start a women's intramural ice hockey program. Student enthusiasm was overwhelming and five teams of approximately sixteen women were formed.

It was a fortuitous time to start a team because Providence College want-
ed to give a number of women’s sports varsity status in order to comply with recommendations set forth in Title IX. February 21, 1974 an NCAA advisory directed schools to survey their female students to determine which sports they were most interested in. On March 18th a survey of Providence College women placed ice hockey as one of the top five most popular sports. Helen Bert took this opportunity to seek varsity status for the women’s ice hockey program. She requested a budget of $4,790 which included a one-time start-up cost of $2,000 for uniforms and equipment. $2,000 was for ice time (2 hours per week at $50 per hour for 20 weeks), $360 for three home games and $430 for three away games, a very modest budget compared to the men’s budget of $38,594.11

In preparation for varsity status, Helen Bert began her search for a coach by asking Lou Lamoriello, the coach of the men’s ice hockey team, for names. Not thinking much of the women’s potential, he suggested Tom Palamara, a freshman, who helped out by doing odd jobs for the men’s team. Tom had no coaching experience and his only hockey experience consisted of playing on a team in Hyde, New York, but he was available. Tom recruited his roommate, Jerry Dougherty, as assistant coach. The two quickly started scouting women for the team. According to Helen’s husband, Hugo Bert, the first practice session was anything but auspicious. Tom blew his whistle for everyone to skate forward and everyone did. Then he blew it again to skate backwards and only some did. Hugo remembers saying to himself, “This could be trouble.” The goalie was enthusiastic, but could hardly skate. In order to avoid embarrassment, Tom assigned two players to assist her when she left the ice or changed ends of the rink.

Developing the skills of his players was not his only problem. Tom met resistance from Lou Lamoriello, the men’s hockey coach and the manager of the rink. Lou didn’t believe that there should be a women’s hockey program, so he assigned the team midnight or later practice times. They were given a small locker room, but no towels. When they skated he allowed them to light the rink only partially. He didn’t see any need to waste electricity on them. In fact, he was quoted as saying, “[since] girls can’t pass the puck hard, they didn’t need to see it.” It wasn’t until the third season of play that they were allowed to use the scoreboard.12

The pattern at most of the schools was the same. Female students worked to get ice hockey established as a club sport. College administrators were supportive both because of the move toward coeducation and because of the implications of Title IX. Some members of the previously all-male athletic departments attempted to thwart the growth of women’s ice hockey and saw it as a threat to the patriarchal sports establishment. Politically they couldn’t openly challenge the rights of the women to establish the programs, but they

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11. From Appendix C of Report on Women’s Athletics prepared by Health, Recreation and Social Services Subcommittee of Women’s Liaison Committee, Providence College.
could subvert the programs in other ways. For example, they could give the women the worst ice times, and not provide them with equipment or trained coaches.

Princeton University in 1974 was the fifth school to field a women’s ice hockey club team. Princeton had been coed for five years. At Princeton thirty-five enthusiastic women came out for the first practice. Most of the women had never played ice hockey and skating skills ranged from adequate to abysmal. Again two male students, Donald Pettit ’76 and John Miner ’76, volunteered to coach the team. The male athletic establishment did little to facilitate the team’s development. They were allocated ice time three or four times a week from 10:30 PM to midnight and lent money to buy equipment. However, the money had to be repaid and no money was allocated for games or travel. Sheer determination on the part of the women made the program successful. As Robin E. Temple ’76 recalled, “The women managed to raise enough money to outfit twenty players and to finance four road trips and an expanded home schedule.” But the most significant accomplishment was that “the team attained an important level of acceptance and respect at Princeton (where people originally thought they were crazy).”

The first two years Princeton’s women’s ice hockey team exemplified the ideals of the women’s model in which participation was open to all and the emphasis was on comradery and development of skills rather than winning. In fact, the second season so many women came out for the team that rather than turn anyone away two teams were formed. Everyone got a chance to play. Irene Lincoln ’77 remembered, “[there was] an open invitation for any new or non-skater to come and join. Although I spent a good deal of my first semester crashing into the boards and my teammates ... I soon managed to learn how to play the game.” Team bonding (comradery) was extremely strong because the women spent so much time together in late night practices, games and never-ending fund raising.

At Princeton as at other schools, once the team gained varsity status and recognition within the predominately male athletic department, the low-key club model gave way to the highly competitive male model in which winning takes precedence. When the Princeton women gained varsity status in the 1979-1980 season, not only did they get funding for the team but an experienced male coach. Bill Quackenbush served as the women’s coach from 1979-1985. He had been the Princeton men’s hockey coach from 1967-1973. He was a former NHL player who spent seven years with the Detroit Red Wings and seven years with the Boston Bruins. Five times he was named to the NHL all-star team and in 1948-49 he won the Lady Bing Trophy for “outstanding play and sportsmanship.” The summer of 1976 he was named to the NHL Hall of Fame. Under Quackenbush’s leadership the

Princeton women won the Ivy League championships three times (1982, 1983 and 1984).\textsuperscript{15}

The next two schools to establish teams were Dartmouth College and the University of New Hampshire. Both had club teams in 1975. Varsity status was granted at the University of New Hampshire in 1977 and at Dartmouth in 1979.

The reason for Dartmouth’s decision to grant varsity status to both women’s ice hockey and soccer according to Peter Seavers, athletic director, was to bring Dartmouth into full compliance with Title IX. The announcement of how the programs were to be funded brought complaints from both men’s and women’s varsity coaches who thought that established programs would suffer budget cuts. Men’s ice hockey coach, Chris Clark, and women’s field hockey coach, Mary Coorigan, questioned how the college could encourage the expansion of new women’s programs if they threatened established programs.\textsuperscript{16} Athletic funding on most college campuses is limited, so any new program is often envisioned as a threat to the budgets of established programs. Ivy League and men’s colleges that initiated women’s ice hockey programs immediately on becoming coed met the least resistance.

After a series of men coaches, George Crowe, the Dartmouth men’s hockey coach from 1975-1984, took over the coaching duties. In 1976 Crowe was named the New England Division I Coach of the Year. In 1979 he was named \textit{Boston Herald} Coach of the Year and in 1980 National Collegiate Hockey Coach of the Year by the \textit{Hockey News}.\textsuperscript{17} Under Coach Crowe the team won the Ivy League Championships in 1991, 1993, and in a tie with Princeton in 1995. See Table 2 for a listing of Ivy League Tournament Champions.

\begin{table}[h]
\centering
\begin{tabular}{|c|c|c|}
\hline
Year & Team & Year & Team \\
\hline
1976 & Cornell & 1987 & Harvard \\
1977 & Cornell & 1988 & Harvard \\
1978 & Cornell & 1989 & Harvard \\
1979 & Cornell & 1990 & Cornell \\
1980 & Cornell & 1991 & Dartmouth \\
1982 & Princeton & 1993 & Dartmouth \\
1986 & Brown & & & \\
\hline
\end{tabular}
\caption{Ivy League Tournament Champions}
\end{table}

Note: Yale has never won.

When the University of New Hampshire program was granted varsity sta-

\textsuperscript{17} \textit{Dartmouth Women's Ice Hockey Guide 1986-1987}.
tus in 1977, Russ McCurdy became coach. Under his leadership the University of New Hampshire developed one of the top women's programs. The first four seasons the team was undefeated and had a 72-0-1 record. Under his leadership the team won four EAIAW Championships, four ECAC Championships, and twice won the University Cup for excellence in American and Canadian Women's Ice Hockey.

Russ McCurdy was selected as the head coach of the U.S. National Women's Ice Hockey team that competed in the 1992 International Ice Hockey Federation World Championships in Helsinki, Finland, April 19-25, 1992. The U.S. team won the silver medal. McCurdy had skated on the U.S. Men's National Ice Hockey team after graduating from Boston University where he played varsity ice hockey.18

In 1977 Harvard and Yale became the last of the Ivy League colleges to field women's ice hockey teams. Yale's women's team started out with varsity status, whereas Harvard's was a club team for one year prior to becoming varsity.

Harvard's first coach was Joe Bretagna '73 who had been the men's hockey goalie. Yale's first coach was Tyler Benson. Although this pattern of appointing male coaches may at first appear chauvinistic, it was based on practical considerations. There were few women with hockey experience. Efforts were made to appoint women ice hockey coaches. For example, Kathy Lenahan, who had been an outstanding player for Providence College from 1977-1981, became the third coach of the Yale women's team in 1984 and coached for two seasons. Northeastern University, which was the last of the original ECAC Division I schools to sponsor a team in 1978, had a woman as its first women's hockey coach. Paula Dumont had been a professional figure skater in Ontario and in 1978 was a student at Northeastern. Her husband Bruce who served as assistant coach was the son of former Bruin star, Woody Dumont. Paula was not only instrumental in getting hockey started at Northeastern, but she is also responsible for arranging the first women's Beanpot Tournament in 1979 among Northeastern, Harvard, Boston College and Boston University. The first year she coached the team to a winning season 5-4 and to the Beanpot Tournament championship.19

Today with more women having played ice hockey and moving into coaching, the pattern of having predominately male women's ice hockey coaches has changed. In 1995 the majority of ECAC Division I women's ice hockey coaches are women.

Title IX has been the major force behind this change. As part of NCAA certification each college must prepare a self-study report. Part of that report focuses on gender equity and specifically examines the numbers of male and

female coaches. Most college and athletic department administrators are making efforts to appoint more women coaches so as to comply with gender equity guidelines.

In the early stages of women's ice hockey, having male coaches who had either played varsity ice hockey or coached men's collegiate ice hockey teams may have been a distinct advantage. These men wanted to develop strong programs similar to the men's and they wanted coaching status on a par with the coaches of the men's program. This may have made it easier for later women coaches.

As with men's ECAC ice hockey, the Ivy League colleges, as well as participating in ECAC championship finals, sponsor their own Ivy League championship. All the Ivy League teams with the exception of Yale University have at one time or another won the championship. The ECAC championship has never been won by an Ivy League team. Of the twelve ECAC Championships held between 1984 and 1995, Providence has won six, New Hampshire four and Northeastern two. These non-Ivy schools have had a recruitment advantage. One, since their admission standards are lower they can draw from a larger pool of women hockey players. Two, they have been able to offer athletic scholarships. See Table 3 for a listing of ECAC Champions.

The number of women's ice hockey teams in the ECAC has continued to grow since 1984 with the addition of private coeducational colleges in the northeast. All of these schools recruit a large number of students from New England boarding schools that have strong girls' hockey programs.

**TABLE 3**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ECAC CHAMPIONSHIPS</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>DIVISION I</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1984 Providence</td>
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<tr>
<td>1985 Providence</td>
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<tr>
<td>1986 New Hampshire</td>
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<tr>
<td>1987 New Hampshire</td>
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<tr>
<td>1988 Northeastern</td>
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<tr>
<td>1989 Northeastern: top two teams, Bowdoin &amp; RIT</td>
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<tr>
<td>1990 New Hampshire</td>
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<td>1991 New Hampshire</td>
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<tr>
<td>1992 Providence</td>
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<td>1993 Providence</td>
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<td>1994 Providence</td>
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<td>1995 Providence</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>DIVISION III</strong></th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1989 RIT</td>
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<tr>
<td>1990 St. Lawrence</td>
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<tr>
<td>1991 St. Lawrence</td>
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<tr>
<td>1992 St. Lawrence</td>
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<tr>
<td>1993 No Division III Championship.</td>
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<td>1993 No Division III Championship.</td>
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Note: No Ivy League school has ever won.
Ironically, it was the movement toward coeducation in the 1970s that provided the opportunity for women to play intercollegiate ice hockey in the northeast. When the elite men’s Ivy League colleges and exclusive boys’ eastern boarding schools admitted girls, they expected the girls to adapt to the traditional male educational program. Equity meant that not only in the classroom but on the athletic field they were to be treated the same as male students. Consequently, there wasn’t the traditional prejudice against women playing ice hockey that was often present at traditional coeducational schools. With no women’s athletic programs in place, money was appropriated to develop a women’s sports program in accordance with the interests of the women students. It was the women students, in almost all instances, who approached the athletic departments for permission to start women’s club ice hockey. Since the facilities were already in place and funding for a club program receives little or no financial sponsorship, athletic administrators were willing to accommodate their requests. The first coaches were often male undergraduate or graduate student volunteers who had played men’s ice hockey. The men enjoyed the idea of developing a female team and the women were very appreciative of their efforts since most had never played ice hockey. The women’s enthusiasm for the sport was no doubt predicated on the fact that at these schools men’s ice hockey was popular and prestigious. Some women were eager to be part of the Ivy League hockey tradition. After all, the women who were first admitted to the men’s schools had already broken one gender barrier; no doubt breaking another by playing ice hockey was very appealing. Once these clubs were established the women looked to other colleges to compete against. Since the men’s hockey Eastern Collegiate Athletic Conference included the Ivy League schools of Yale, Princeton, Harvard, Dartmouth and Cornell plus three other northeastern colleges, Providence, a Catholic men’s college, Northeastern and the University of New Hampshire, it was a rather simple proposition to establish a women’s intercollegiate league. At first the league was under the governance of women physical educators who formed the EAIAW. In 1984 when the EAIAW was absorbed by the ECAC, the ECAC took over the sponsorship of the women’s intercollegiate ice hockey.

Until at least forty institutions have established programs in a sport, that sport cannot be recognized by the NCAA. Therefore, women’s ice hockey was not an NCAA sponsored sport. The NCAA is the major national collegiate sports governing body. Without that sponsorship, colleges and universities that want NCAA certification have little incentive to start a women’s intercollegiate ice hockey program. Consequently, women’s intercollegiate ice hockey has remained an exclusive northeastern tradition. Without the women’s liberation movement of the 1960s, it is unlikely that the men’s Ivy League schools would have opted to become coeducational in the 1970s. Even if they had admitted women, without the passage of Title IX in 1972 there would have been very little incentive to develop women’s
intercollegiate sports programs on a parity with men’s. Without Title IX women’s athletics might have languished with limited administrative or athletic department support and with little or no funding. It took the convergence of these three historical events to provide the opportunity for the development of women’s intercollegiate ice hockey in the northeast, the women’s liberation movement, the movement toward coeducation at the Ivy League colleges and the passage of Title IX of the Education Act of 1972.