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PREP BASKETBALL, PAGE D3

Loyola uses defense  
to defeat St. Clair

# Sports

## Mavericks skate on despite slip in polls

The national pollsters must have been less than impressed with Minnesota State's tie and win at Bowling Green State last weekend.

They must have yawned at the Mavericks' undefeated record in opposing rinks, scooped at their 3.5 goals a game (which only ranks seventh in the nation) and dismissed Scott Paluch's impressions of goaltender Mike Zacharias.

"We've seen a lot of good goalies in our league (the Central Collegiate Hockey Association)," the Falcons coach told Bowling Green's Sentinel-Tribune Saturday night. "But that's one of the

best goalies we've seen consistently over two nights. He was outstanding."

Minnesota State fell a spot in one of the national polls and two spots in another and are now rated 11th in the country on both lists.

Actually, it was a tough week for anyone who contributes to the rankings to figure.

Michigan knocked off No. 1-ranked Minnesota then proceeded to get shut out by unranked but improving Wisconsin.

In its first tough test of the season, Air Force defeated Colorado College to improve to 13-0-0 before suffering its first loss of the sea-



**SHANE  
FREDERICK**  
Free Press

### Online



Shane Frederick's hockey blog is now available at [www.mankatofreepress.com/hockeyblog](http://www.mankatofreepress.com/hockeyblog). On game nights, read his blog updated from pregame to postgame for all the latest on Maverick hockey and news from around college hockey.

son to Denver the next night.

Also, Notre Dame

improved its unbeaten streak to 10 games (8-0-2) and is now No. 1. Princeton saw its eight-game winning streak come to an end against Mercyhurst, of all teams. And Northeastern is the surprise school at the top of the Hockey East standings.

Minnesota State, meanwhile, improved to 8-3-3 after the nonconference series in Ohio. It has lost just once in its last eight games and deserves to be among the teams under consideration for the top 10.

Despite being off to their best start in a decade, the Mavericks don't appear to be resting on their laurels.

"We didn't play great on Friday," coach Troy Jutting said after practice Monday afternoon. "It was another

one of those games that, two years ago, we would have lost. Probably last year, too."

The Mavericks tied the Falcons 2-2 in the series opener. Jutting said, however, that Saturday night's game, a 5-2 victory that saw five different players score goals, was one of the two best Minnesota State has played this season, a game that would have been a blowout if not for Bowling Green's own goaltender, Jimmy Spratt.

"We were buzzing," Jutting said.

If the pollsters are in wait-and-see mode when it comes to Minnesota State, the Mavericks will have the chance to show them something over the next two weeks, as they return to

Western Collegiate Hockey Association play against St. Cloud State and No. 8 Denver before taking a mid-season break.

"We're starting to get the kind of attitude I think it takes to win," Jutting said. "We've played a few games close to that. The good thing about it is these kids understand that. I haven't got the feeling that these kids think they're playing better than they are. The kids think they have more."

If that's true, then the Mavericks will move up in the rankings that really count — the Pairwise.

*Shane Frederick is a Free Press staff writer. Read his blog at [www.mankatofreepress.com/hockeyblog](http://www.mankatofreepress.com/hockeyblog).*