

## Heading up north

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As the Minnesota State women's hockey team matured after a up and down 2009-10 season, the same goes for head coach Eric Means, who enters his second year at the helm looking to build on the bright spots from last season and improve on a seventh place finish in the WCHA.

The 1-1 Mavericks will travel to the University of Duluth this weekend to challenge the Bulldogs — a WCHA powerhouse.

They are supplemented by a solid group of experienced players, led by Finnish forwards Emmi Leinonen and Nina Tikkinen.

Joining Leinonen and Tikkinen up front is sophomore sharpshooter Lauren Smith. The forward position has a lot of depth as well, including junior Moira O'Connor and senior Lisa Edman.

Also returning is starting goaltender Alli Altmann. Altmann, a junior, grabbed hold of the job early last season and kept the Mavericks in many games with a very respectable .897 save percentage.

The group defending the net for the Mavericks is probably the team's most experienced unit. The defenders are led by juniors Jackie Otto and Ariel Mackley, who both logged minutes last year. The unit will also be aided by the return of sophomore Emilia Andersson who already has her fair share of experience after playing for the Swedish Olympic Team last year. Andersson is also the most capable offensive blueliner, and should help the team on the power play. Senior Amy Udvig and sophomore Erika Magnusson should also see a lot of time on the blue line this year.

The Mavericks and Bulldogs play Saturday and Sunday. Both games are at 3:07 p.m. **R**