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MSU tries to prove depth

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The WCHA welcomed two new teams into the conference this season with the additions of Nebraska-Omaha and Bemidji State. This makes the conference deeper than it has ever been which could be cause for concern with the Minnesota State Mankato men's hockey team, who was picked to finish tenth in the conference.

Head coach Troy Jutting isn't thinking about that though. He is more focused on finding a way to put his team in position to win its first game of the season. After a loss and tie to Michigan Tech last weekend, the Mavericks return home to host Colorado College.

"We're looking for better results," said Jutting. "I think we've played pretty well. In four games we've only lost once, but we also haven't won yet. We need to get results."

It will be the first WCHA home series for the Mavericks and you can bet that there will be plenty of energy inside the Verizon Wireless Center. Colorado College is always near the top of the WCHA and looks to be one of the teams to beat again this year.

The Tigers are ranked No. 19 heading into this weekend. It will be the first WCHA series of the year for CC after going 2-1-1 in non-conference games. The Tigers have a tradition of having a fast, strong skating team and this year is no different.

"They'll be a good skating

club," said Jutting. "They always are. These will be fast paced games. It should be a fun weekend for college hockey."

CC is a veteran team, returning 18 players from last year's squad which went 19-17-3. Special teams need to improve for the Mavericks if they are going to be successful this weekend.

The Mavericks went 1-11 on the power play last weekend while also allowing two shorthanded goals. That number could change greatly if the Mavericks could get more production from their forwards. Three of the seven goals scored last weekend were by defensemen.

The Mavericks defense has been the strong point of the season so far. This comes as no surprise as MSU returned all six defensemen from a year ago including seniors Kurt Davis, Channing Boe and Ben Youds.

Forwards that will be counted on to provide a spark for the Mavericks offense will be senior captain Ryan Galiardi and junior Michael Dorr. Dorr led the Mavericks in scoring in the second half of last season after transferring from the Uni-



Michael Dorr

versity of Minnesota.

Dorr leads the forwards in scoring with four points in the early part of this season. Dorr is perhaps the most talented player on the team and the way he plays will be a large factor in the Mavericks ability to score.

"We need to Mike to score for us," said Jutting. "If we're going to be successful, Michael has to score for us and he has done a good job of it so far."

The Mavericks are one of six teams to already have a WCHA series under their belts. That will make it that much more important to come away with at least two points this weekend or the Mavericks will see themselves looking up in the standings early on.

It's still too early to get overly excited about wins and losses, but playing well at home against a ranked team could bring some early momentum to the Mavericks.

"We're not a team with one or two superstars," said Jutting. "But I think we're deep. We need everyone to contribute to be successful. I have been very pleased with our efforts so far."

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