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HUSKY ATHLETICS

Athletic Media Relations - Women's Hockey Update

Contact: Celest Stang 320-308-2141 or crstang@stcloudstate.edu

2007-08 SCSU WOMEN'S HOCKEY NEWS

For Immediate Release: May 8, 2008



Laura Fast Garners WCHA Post-Graduate Scholarship

MADISON, Wisc. – The Western Collegiate Hockey Association today (May 9) announced that Laura Fast of St. Cloud State University and Andrew Thomas of the University of Denver are the recipients of the annual WCHA Post-Graduate Scholarship Program for 2008-09.

“We are both tremendously pleased and extremely proud to announce the latest WCHA Post-Graduate Scholarship winners,” said Commissioner Bruce M. McLeod and Associate Commissioner Sara R. Martin in a joint statement. “Together, Laura Fast and Andrew Thomas represent the very best of collegiate athletics – both on and off the ice – and the entire WCHA membership joins us in congratulating both of them.

“We are fortunate to have had both of them as student-athletes playing hockey in the WCHA and earning their degrees from Association-member institutions. We thank them for all they have done for the betterment of college hockey and we wish them all the best in their future endeavors. No question, both of them will be very successful in whatever they choose to pursue.”

An advocate of excellence both on and off the ice, the WCHA announced the annual post-graduate scholarship program in April of 2003, with the first recipients named after the 2003-04 school year. The post-graduate scholarships are two grants of \$10,000 each that are presented annually to a male and female student-athlete for post-graduate studies.

Fast, a senior forward from Calgary, Alberta, is graduating from St. Cloud State this month with a Bachelor of Science degree. A three-time honoree of the prestigious WCHA Scholar-Athlete award and a three-time member of the All-WCHA Academic Team, she carries an undergraduate grade-point average (GPA) of 3.72 on a 4.0 scale, with a major in Elementary Education and a minor in Special Education. To earn recognition as a WCHA Scholar-Athlete, conference member student-athletes must have completed at least one year of residency at their present institution prior to the current academic year and must also have a GPA of at least 3.50 (on a 4.0 scale) for the previous two semesters or three quarters or an overall GPA of at least 3.50 for all terms at their present institution.

“Laura has been a two-year captain for our hockey program here at St. Cloud State and she is an outstanding student-athlete and top performer on our team,” said head coach Jeff Giesen. “A very strong leader both vocally and by example, she also serves the community in a variety of roles and is always willing to go above the regular demands of our team to reach success.”

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As team captain in 2007-08, Fast played in 37 of the Huskies' 38 games overall and contributed 13 scoring points (4g, 9a), helping them to one of the most successful seasons in program history with an overall record of 18-15-5 (.539) and to a fourth place finish in the final WCHA regular season standings. St. Cloud State, which went on a 12-1-2 tear from Nov. 3-Jan. 19, won their first round league playoff series over Ohio State and also earned a trip to the 2008 WCHA FINAL FACE-OFF in Duluth, Minn. Over her four-year collegiate playing career, Fast took the ice in 146 games, scoring 32 goals and adding 45 assists for 77 points to rank seventh on the all-time Husky scoring list. She was also selected to participate in the third annual NCAA Frozen Four Skills Challenge this past April 11 at the Pepsi Center in Denver, Colo.

"Laura's athletic ability is of the highest level and she contributes to our team in a variety of capacities, playing on the power-play and as one of our top penalty-killers," said Giesen. "As an outstanding student, she goes above and beyond the requirements of community service for our team. She will complete her Bachelor's degree in Education, including her student teaching, with is rare even among non-athlete students. She has directed floor hockey clinics at local elementary schools and also participated in 'I Like to Read Month' with elementary schools. Laura is of the highest of character and someone I hope that my own daughter would follow her lead on how to be a student-athlete. Her leadership has helped establish a culture that will carry on for time to come."

Fast was nominated for the WCHA Post-Graduate Scholarship by St. Cloud State Faculty Athletics Representative Bill Hudson. According to Hudson, Fast plans on pursuing a master's degree in secondary education, has aspirations to eventually complete a Ph.D. in the field of education, and pursue a career in elementary education.

This marks the second straight year that SCSU has had a female student-athlete garner this prestigious honor. Last season, former Husky Denelle Maguet (St. Rose, Manitoba) was named the female 2007 Postgraduate Scholarship award winner. Maguet completed her career at SCSU with 57 points (19g, 38a) and was named to both the WCHA All-Academic and WCHA Scholar teams twice in her career.

The 2007-08 St. Cloud State University women's hockey team (18-15-5, 11-13-4 WCHA) completed one of its most successful seasons in program history by tying the school record for wins with 18. The Huskies also matched their best finish in regular season standings with a fourth-place performance in the WCHA.

