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Minnesota and Xcel Energy Center Awarded 2010 NCAA Men's Hockey Regional

Minnesota will be home to NCAA postseason men's hockey competition for the next three seasons as the university has been selected to host the 2010 NCAA West Regional at the Xcel Energy Center in St. Paul.

The event is scheduled for Fri.-Sat., March 26-27, 2010. Minnesota had previously been awarded the 2009 NCAA West Regional at Mariucci Arena and the 2011 NCAA Frozen Four at the Xcel Energy Center.

"As chair of the NCAA men's ice hockey committee, I can assure that the Xcel Energy Center was awarded the bid due to the tremendous reputation of the facility and the work of individuals like Jack Larson at the center and Marc Ryan from our staff," Minnesota Director of Athletics Joel Maturi said. "The committee has made a conscious decision to try to move regional competition off campuses and Olympic-sized rinks, while still preserving a great college hockey atmosphere. The Xcel Energy Center does just that."

The 2010 regional marks the first time the Xcel Energy Center will host an NCAA regional tournament. The facility was the site for the 2002 NCAA Frozen Four when Minnesota defeated Maine in the title game. The home of the NHL's Minnesota Wild seats 18,064 for hockey and has also been the site of the past eight WCHA Final Five tournaments.

"The Xcel Energy Center is one of the top hockey facilities in North America," Minnesota coach Don Lucia said. "The NCAA made a terrific choice for the fans and the teams that will be playing in the tournament. You want to have an NCAA regional in a first-class facility and the Xcel Energy Center will do a fantastic job hosting the event."

The regional consists of four teams and is one of four regionals across the country with each winner advancing to the Frozen Four, which will be held at Ford Field in Detroit. Other 2010 regionals will be conducted in Fort Wayne, Ind., Albany, N.Y. and Worcester, Mass. Regional semifinal games at the Xcel Energy Center will be played on Fri., March 26 with the regional title game on Sat., March 27. If Minnesota qualifies for

the 2010 NCAA tournament, it will play its regional competition at the Xcel Energy Center.

With the addition of the 2010 event, Minnesota will host the West Regional five times over an 11-year span. Mariucci Arena was the site of the 2000, 2003 and 2005 West Regional tournaments and will host the 2009 event on March 27-28. Minnesota also was awarded 10 regional tournaments as a participant before the NCAA began choosing predetermined sites in 1992.

The NCAA also announced the 2011 regional tournaments will be held in St. Louis, Mo., Green Bay, Wis., Bridgeport, Conn. and Manchester, N.H. with the four winners advancing to the Xcel Energy Center for the Frozen Four.

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