

# 2014 Field Hockey Season in Review

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## Big Ten Represented in Postseason Action

Maryland, Northwestern and Penn State earned berths to the 16-team NCAA Tournament. Making their 27th NCAA Tournament appearance, the Terrapins garnered the No. 2 overall seed. The Wildcats earned an automatic berth to their 12th NCAA Tournament, and first since 1994, after defeating Maryland for the school's first Big Ten Tournament title. Penn State made its fifth consecutive, and 30th overall appearance, with an at-large berth to the postseason tournament. The Terrapins and Nittany Lions advanced to the NCAA Quarterfinals.

## NFHCA All-America Honors

Eleven Big Ten field hockey players highlighted the National Field Hockey Coaches Association All-American Teams. Iowa's Natalie Cafone, Maryland's Maxine Fluharty and Sarah Sprink and Penn State's Laura Gebhart were each first-team honorees. Indiana's Audra Heilman, Iowa's Stephanie Norlander, Michigan's Ainsley McCallister, Michigan State's Abby Barker, Northwestern's Lisa McCarthy and Penn State's Taylor Herold were each named to the second team, while the Terrapins' Katie Gerzabeck earned her first career honor on the third team. Six players were repeat honorees, including the Nittany Lions' Gebhart, who became a four-time NFHCA All-American.

## Maryland Earns Outright Big Ten Championship

The Terrapins captured the outright Big Ten Championship in Maryland's inaugural season as a member of the Big Ten. The title marked the first Big Ten Championship for any team at the University of Maryland, as it compiled a 16-2 overall record and a 7-1 mark in Big Ten play.

## Big Ten Postseason Accolades

Maryland collected four individual honors as the Terrapins' Maxine Fluharty was tabbed Player of the Year, Sarah Sprink was named Defensive Player of the Year, Moira Putsch claimed Freshman of the Year honors and Missy Meharg was named Big Ten Coach of the Year. Iowa's Natalie Cafone was tabbed Offensive Player of the Year. Cafone, Fluharty and Sprink earned spots on the All-Big Ten first team and were joined by Indiana's Audra Heilman, Iowa's Stephanie Norlander, Michigan's Ainsley McCallister and Leslie Smith, Michigan State's Abby Barker, Northwestern's Maddy Carpenter and Lisa McCarthy and Penn State's Laura Gebhart and Taylor Herold. Fluharty was a unanimous first-team All-Big Ten selection, while Heilman, Cafone and McCallister were all named to the All-Big Ten first team for the second consecutive year. Barker was named first-team All-Big Ten for the third consecutive season, while Gebhart became the first Penn State player to claim four straight All-Big Ten first-team honors.

## Wildcats Claim First Tournament Championship

The third-seeded Northwestern field hockey team claimed its first Big Ten Tournament Championship with a 3-1 win over top-seeded Maryland at Phyllis Ocker Field. With the victory, Northwestern earned the Big Ten's automatic berth to the NCAA Tournament. The Wildcats' Maddy Carpenter was named the Tournament MVP, while Iowa's Chandler Ackers, Maryland's Maxine Fluharty and Sarah Sprink, Michigan's Leslie Smith and Sam Swenson, Michigan State's Sierra Patton, Northwestern's Carpenter and Dominique Masters, Ohio State's Kaitlyn Wagner, Penn State's Laura Gebhart and Katie Andrews and Rutgers' Jenn Staab earned Big Ten All-Tournament Team honors.

## Two Regional Players of the Year

Iowa's Natalie Cafone and Maryland's Maxine Fluharty were announced as the NFHCA Regional Players of the Year in their respective regions. Of five total regions, Cafone was named the West Region Player of the Year, while Fluharty earned Mid-Atlantic Region Player of the Year honors.

## Thirty Serve as All-Region Honorees

The NFHCA's Division I All-Region Teams announced 30 honorees from the Big Ten. Eighteen Big Ten selections were named to the first team, while 12 were second-team honorees. Maryland led the way with seven players named to the Mid-Atlantic Region, while Rutgers was also represented in the region. Penn State had five representatives in the Mideast Region, while Indiana, Iowa, Michigan, Michigan State and Northwestern were each represented in the West Region.

## Big Ten Highlights National Statistics

In the final NCAA statistics, Maryland topped four statistical categories, with a 4.00 goals per game and scoring average, 11.26 points per game and a 2.83 scoring margin. The Terrapins' 3.26 assists per game ranked No. 3 nationally, while Michigan ranked sixth with 2.60 assists per contest and Northwestern finished 10<sup>th</sup> with 2.39 assists per outing. Iowa's 3.04 scoring average ranked No. 9 and the Hawkeyes' 3.06 goals per game was the 10<sup>th</sup>-best nationally. Indiana posted the fourth-most defensive saves in the nation with 12 stops, while Maryland (1.17) and Northwestern (1.26) ranked No. 6 and No. 9, respectively, in goals against average. The Nittany Lions' .816 save percentage was the second-best nationally, while the Hoosiers and the Wildcats ranked No. 7 with a .779 save percentage.

## Nationally-Ranked Teams

Six Big Ten field hockey teams opened the season ranked in the NFHCA Preseason Poll, with Maryland as the top-ranked team. Penn State was No. 8, Northwestern came in at No. 14, Michigan State ranked 16<sup>th</sup>, Michigan was No. 17 and Iowa rounded out all teams at No. 20. In week four (Sept. 30), the NFHCA released its rankings and seven Big Ten teams were ranked for the first time all season. It was the first time since 2008 that four Big Ten schools were ranked in the top 10 (No. 5 Iowa, No. 6 Penn State, No. 9 Michigan, No. 10 Michigan State). Five Big Ten teams closed out the season in the final top-20 poll, including No. 2 Maryland, No. 6 Penn State and No. 7 Northwestern in the top 10.

## Nine Honored with Sportsmanship Award

The Big Ten recognized nine Sportsmanship Award honorees. The student-athletes chosen are individuals who have distinguished themselves through sportsmanship and ethical behavior. These student-athletes must also be in good academic standing and have demonstrated good citizenship outside of the sports-competition setting. The 2014 honorees included Indiana's Corinne Karch, Iowa's Brynn Gitt, Maryland's Alyssa Parker, Michigan's Jaime Dean, Michigan State's Becky Stiles, Northwestern's Kristin Wirtz, Ohio State's Alexis Allen, Penn State's Katie Andrews and Rutgers' Jenn Staab.