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**NOTRE DAME FEMALE**

**U19 PREP**

**2026-2027 SEASON**

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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**Notre Dame Adds Female U19 Prep Team for the 2026-2027 Season**

**Wilcox, SK** — Athol Murray College of Notre Dame is proud to announce the expansion of its internationally recognized women's hockey program with the introduction of a U19 Prep team for the 2026-2027 season.

“This is an exciting and important step forward for our female hockey program at Notre Dame,” said Wade Klippenstein, Director of Hockey Development. “The addition of the U19 Prep team continues the College's commitment to support the growth of the female game, and we are excited to give student

athletes another option to play the game they love while furthering their education and graduating from Notre Dame."

The U19 Prep team will compete in approximately 45 games per season participating in elite tournaments and showcase events across North America, providing student-athletes with high-level competition and valuable exposure. Beyond competition, the program creates an additional pathway for elite student-athletes pursuing post-secondary academic and hockey opportunities while developing leadership skills rooted in Notre Dame's tradition of character and community.

Sarah Hodges, Female Hockey Coordinator, emphasized the impact on athlete development and recruitment, "I am excited to add the U19 Prep team to our hockey program. We have players who age out of U18 eligibility before graduating from Notre Dame, and this team allows them to finish their Grade 12 year while continuing to compete at a high-performance level. It also creates new opportunities to recruit talented players from across Canada and internationally."

The U19 Prep team joins Notre Dame's existing U18 AAA, U18 AA and U15 AA female teams creating more opportunities for elite female players who aspire to play at the collegiate, PWHL, National and Olympic Team levels. Notre Dame alumnus Steve O'Rourke, head coach of the PWHL's Seattle Torrent sees the program as an exciting and vital step in the growth of women's hockey at Notre Dame:

"This is a special time for female hockey and for Athol Murray College of Notre Dame. The addition of a U19 team reflects the incredible growth happening across the game. Young athletes now have more visibility, more role models, and more opportunity than ever before, highlighted by the success of the PWHL and the global strength of the women's game. The depth of talent coming through programs like Notre Dame is helping elevate the sport to entirely new levels."

We look forward to introducing the program's head coach to our Notre Dame community in the coming weeks.

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### **About Athol Murray College of Notre Dame**

Athol Murray College of Notre Dame is an independent university preparatory boarding school in Wilcox, Saskatchewan. Founded in 1920 by the Sisters of Charity of St. Louis the school today offers a rigorous academic program to 300 girls and boys in Grades 9–12 that balances academic excellence, character education, and elite athletic development. Internationally recognized for its long-standing hockey program, the school's namesake Father Athol Murray was quoted as saying, "I have three passions in life: God, Canada and Hockey... and not necessarily always in that order." Hockey maybe the school's passion, but education is its purpose.