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The University of Delaware celebrates its record-tying seventh National Intercollegiate Figure Skating Championship title in Lake Placid, New York.

'SUCH A WOW MOMENT'

Blue Hens return to top of podium in Lake Placid

BY CHLOE ROBERTS

The University of Delaware secured its record-tying seventh title at the 25th annual U.S. Intercollegiate Figure Skating Championships, April 12–14, in Lake Placid, New York.

The Blue Hens now stand tied with Boston University for the number of national titles. Their last triumph at this event was 2016. Delaware chalked up 303 points, followed by Boston University with 273 points and Dartmouth College with 226 points.

Nearly 300 student-athletes from 16 colleges and universities competed in 43 events, with skating levels ranging from high beginner through senior. Three teams made their U.S. Intercollegiate Final debuts: University of Washington, Western Michigan University and University of Pennsylvania.

"It was so fun to see all of the skaters who have never been here get to experience Lake Placid for the first time," competition organizer Mary-Elizabeth Wightman said. "I was involved in intercollegiate skating in college. ... I've always thought it was a great program and I thought this would be such a fun event to bring to Lake Placid."

In Olympic fashion, the opening ceremony boasted a spectacle for all the teams



and visitors, including recognition of more than 100 graduating seniors amongst all the teams, a passing of the torch and lighting of a cauldron.

"It was such a 'wow' moment," Scott Brody, Collegiate Skating Subcommittee chair and official at the Final said of the opening ceremony. "Intercollegiate got the recognition it deserves, and we have ORDA (Olympic Regional Development Authority) to thank for that."

In terms of the competition itself, Brody

said, "The Final last year was so competitive, but this year topped that. The Final was reinvigorating, and I cannot wait to see what the future holds for this program."

Blue Hens coaches Leah Krauskopf and Colin McManus knew this event was going to be one to remember.

"We knew this would be a big year for the program, and we didn't let it change our overall approach," Krauskopf said.

McManus added, "We have a really long legacy with this team and national titles; it feels good to bring that back home."

The Delaware team earned 11 individual gold medals, the most of any team at the event. Events that solidified its win were the junior women's championship and junior men's championship, in which skaters Olivia Tennant and Bryan Lehmann both won first place, securing a combined 28 points toward the team's total.

"This group has something special," University of Delaware Figure Skating President Natalie Raab said.

"They have put in the work," Vice President Emilee Rodolfo added. "It has all paid off. Everyone skated so well this weekend."

Boston University posted impressive finishes in the team maneuvers events and senior men's championship. The New England



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University of Delaware's Emilee Rodolfo (team vice president) and Natalie Raab (team president) are cheered on by all the teams represented at the event.

team collected 47 points from those events alone, widening the gap between them and third-place Dartmouth College.

"We went into the Final with high spirits and a great roster," BU ice dance coach Andrew Korda said. "We knew it would be tough, but we felt prepared."

Andrea Mohns-Brillaud, coach of the Terriers, said, "I think everyone on our team was on the same page and felt great about the decisions in the end."

Boston team co-president Katie Koster (with Noelle Flannigan) echoed their coaches' thoughts: "It goes back to our team philosophy of preparation and our coaches creating the best roster for our community each year."

One of the teams making its debut, University of Pennsylvania, also had a whirlwind Final, placing ninth out of 16 teams, with 133 points.

"Our goal was to finish in the top 10, and we did that," University of Pennsylvania co-captain Nicholas Bausenwein said. Co-captain Emily Zhang added, "I couldn't have thought of a better place to have our team's first Final."

The University of Pennsylvania's medal haul included a gold in the pre-gold pattern dance.

For more information on intercollegiate skating and other opportunities to continue skating in college, visit usfigureskating.org.

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Boston University's Bronwyn Morris, Danielle Hsieh and Caitlyn Struven earned big points in the low team maneuvers.

