University of Delaware wins

2011 U.S. INTERCOLLEGIATE TEAM CHAMPIONSHIPS

by ANDREA MOHNS-BRILLAUD

Athletes representing nine teams competed March 19–20 at the 2011 U.S. Intercollegiate Team Figure Skating Championships, with the University of Delaware edging Eastern Section rivals Boston University and Dartmouth College for the title.

The University of Michigan in Ann Arbor hosted the event at Yost Arena.

While there were plenty of individual standouts, the trio of teams from the Eastern Section controlled the top of the team standings.

Dartmouth enjoyed a sizeable lead following the dance portion of the competition. As the day progressed, Boston University, the two-time defending champions, and the University of Delaware, closed the gap.

Entering the high team maneuvers, the competition's final event, Dartmouth maintained a slight advantage over the University of Delaware. The University of Delaware needed Boston University to win the high team maneuvers in order for it to overtake Dartmouth for the team title.

And that's what happened.

Boston University rose to the occasion, nailing every element en route to winning the high team maneuvers and giving Delaware its first intercollegiate title since 2002. Dartmouth earned silver, while Boston University finished third and Miami University fourth.

"All of us started coaching the collegiate level three years ago and have had a friendly rivalry since," Delaware's coach Joel McKeever said.

Referring to Andrea Mohns-Brillaud, coach of Boston University, and Jackie Smith, coach of Dartmouth College, McKeever said, "I believe that we (coaches and skaters) push each other to be better. The level of skating has gotten stronger every year. These student-athletes are in better shape and are putting out programs with more difficulty, including the ladies and men's events that were complete with well-executed triples."

The other universities and colleges also were well represented, with several having skaters winning individual events.

With many of the skaters not having a team coach, they rallied behind one another as they assumed the role of coach and athlete for each other throughout the event.

"It means a lot to me to represent my school, and it's different in collegiate skating because it's truly a team event," said Lindsey Cohen, a former Team USA competitor, from the University of Delaware.

Becky Binn is a junior at the University of Wisconsin who competes on the school's synchronized skating team, as well as the university's intercollegiate team in free skate and solo dance.

"I love the team environment at the intercollegiate competitions and how the team works together to win points," she said.

Alexandra Mahler of Dartmouth feels that collegiate skating is important to her, because it has allowed her to skate beyond her high school years and continue competing in free skate and solo dance events.

"It's one of my favorite things about college," Mahler said.