

Blue Line Mastermind

Tuesday, November 28, 2017



PHOTO BY FRED KFOURY III / ICON SPORTSWIRE VIA AP IMAGES

On a late October morning, half a dozen games into his first season as an assistant coach in the National Hockey League, Kevin Dean '91 works a Boston Bruins practice session at the team's Warrior Ice Arena facility in Brighton, Mass. While head coach Bruce Cassidy conducts a drill at mid-ice, Dean shags pucks, checking in on a couple of Bruins defensemen as he tours the ice. He stops to chat with Cassidy, then watches as star forward Brad Marchand rips the puck into a net and is greeted with his teammates' appreciative whoops.

"You're not just there

The night before, the Bruins had snapped a losing skid with a 6-3 win

SERIES:

UNH MAGAZINE

WINTER 2018

SUBSCRIBE
TO THE UNH
TODAY
NEWSLETTER

SUBSCRIBE
TO UNH TODAY
RSS

RELATED LINKS

**A Life Driven by
Curiosity**

Mental Health

History Maker

to play hockey for four years and leave. You're there to add something back to the university and have some esprit de corps, for lack of a better term. UNH provided that balance."

over the Vancouver Canucks. The mood on the ice is upbeat. "It's a lot more fun when we win than when we lose, that's for sure," Dean says.

Dean, the only former Wildcat currently coaching in the NHL, is upbeat himself as he talks about falling in love with Durham and UNH hockey at first sight and the unplanned nature of his long professional playing and coaching careers. A defenseman, he played in 331 games over seven years in the

NHL and helped the New Jersey Devils win the Stanley Cup in the 1994–95 season. He got his start in coaching in the Devils organization as well, working with its American Hockey League team in Lowell and its East Coast Hockey League team in Trenton. In the 2016–17 season, his first as a head coach in the American Hockey League, he led the Providence Bruins to the AHL playoffs. Last summer, he was promoted to the Boston job, where he works primarily with the team's defensemen.

"I had the opportunity to come here and jumped at it," Dean says. "You want to work with the best players in the best league."

Standing behind the bench in the TD Garden can be pressure-packed — "the puck drops and there's a lot of eyes on you, a certain amount of responsibility," Dean says — but he takes the same one-step-at-a-time approach to his coaching career that he did to playing. "I don't have aspirations to be a head coach in the NHL yet," he says. "I'm not ready. I still have a lot to learn. Try to learn every day and get a little bit better."

Dean and his wife, Jill, live in North Andover, Massachusetts, with their four children. He gets to Durham as often as he can, usually

to talk hockey with men's head coach Dick Umile '72 and associate head coaches Mike Souza '00 and Glenn Stewart '94. Umile, who is retiring after this year and handing over the reins of the program to Souza, took over as head coach when Bob Kullen passed away in November 1990, early in Dean's senior season. That year marked a resurgence of the UNH program and its first winning campaign since 1983–84 — a transformation Dean helped lead.

“He was a big, strong, athletic defenseman with a lot of offensive skill,” Umile says. “He’s an absolutely terrific guy and a real good hockey man. He’s got a lot of knowledge of the game.”

Dean played alongside Stewart as a Wildcat, and he and Souza became fast friends when both lived and worked in Providence, Dean with the minor league Bruins and Souza as an assistant at Brown University. Dean's Wildcat connections and loyalties run deep, and from the vantage point of his own coaching career, he says he appreciates the balance Kullen and then Umile instilled in their players.

“You’re a student first, you’re a person, you’re someone’s son, you’re a part of the university,” Dean says. “You’re not just there to play hockey for four years and leave. You’re there to add something back to the university and have some esprit de corps, for lack of a better term. UNH provided that balance. There are great people up in Durham. I think it kind of trickles down into the type of person you are when you leave there.”

[COMMENT ON THIS ARTICLE](#)

Written by Allen Lessels '76

Originally published in **UNH Magazine Winter 2018 Issue**

UNH MAGAZINE WINTER 2018

RELATED ARTICLES



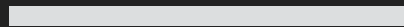
November 30, 2021 | SPORTS

A Season to Remember



January 3, 2022 | UNIVERSITY OF NEW HAMPSHIRE

So Much To Celebrate





March 22, 2022 | NORTHEAST PASSAGE

At the Top of Their Game



University of New Hampshire

UNH Today is produced for the UNH community and for friends of UNH.

The stories are written by the staff of **UNH Communications and Public Affairs**.

Email us: unhtoday.editor@unh.edu.

MANAGE YOUR SUBSCRIPTION **CONTACT US**



UNH Today • UNH Main Directory: 603-862-1234
Copyright © 2022 • TTY Users: 7-1-1 or 800-735-2964 (Relay NH)

[USNH Privacy Policies](#) • [USNH Terms of Use](#) • [ADA Acknowledgement](#)

