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The Gridiron Club of Greater Boston

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Gridiron Club of Greater Boston Announces 23 Semi-Finalists for 65th Walter Brown Award

Slate of American-born Division One hockey players in New England includes 16 from Hockey East, five from ECAC, two from Atlantic Hockey

BOSTON – February 6, 2017 – [Gridiron Club of Greater Boston](http://www.gridclubofgreaterboston.com) president Jim Kearney announced today that 23 NCAA Division One players are semifinalists for the 65th [Walter Brown Award](#), presented annually to the best American-born college hockey player in New England.

The nation's oldest nationally-recognized college hockey honor, the Walter Brown Award was established in 1953 by the members of the 1933 Massachusetts Rangers, the first American team ever to win the World Championship Tournament. Brown coached the Rangers to the title in Prague, Czechoslovakia, that year; the team defeated Canada 2-1 in overtime in the championship game.

Thirteen teams are represented in the slate of candidates that includes 16 players from [Hockey East](#), five from [ECAC Hockey](#), and two from [Atlantic Hockey](#). The slate comprises 16 forwards, four goalies, and three defensemen. Boston College, Boston University, Harvard, and UMass-Lowell all have three nominees while Northeastern and New Hampshire have two.

Eight of the 2017 nominees were semifinalists a year ago. They are Boston College forwards [Colin White](#) and [Ryan Fitzgerald](#); Northeastern forward [Zach Aston-Reese](#); Connecticut forward [Tage Thompson](#); New Hampshire forward [Tyler Kelleher](#); Lowell defenseman [Dylan Zink](#); Harvard goaltender [Merrick Madsen](#); and Bentley forward [Kyle Schmidt](#).

The following is the complete list of semifinalists, by team, with statistics through February 5:

Boston College: Ryan Fitzgerald, senior forward, North Reading, MA, (7-14-21); Colin White, sophomore forward, Hanover, MA, (13-10-23); [Joe Woll](#), freshman goalie, St. Louis, MO, (23 GP, 56 GA, .921 save pct.)

Boston University: [Clayton Keller](#), freshman forward, Swansea, IL (13-16-29); [Charlie McAvoy](#), sophomore defenseman, Long Beach, NY; [Jake Oettinger](#), freshman goalie, Lakeville, MN (23 GP, 41 GA, .936 save pct.)

Harvard: [Adam Fox](#), freshman defenseman, Jericho, NY (2-23-25); Merrick Madsen, junior goalie, Acton, CA (23 GP, 48 GA, .919 save pct.); [Sean Malone](#), senior forward, West Seneca, NY (13-13-26).

UMass-Lowell: [Joe Gambardella](#), senior forward, Staten Island, NY (12-25-37); [C.J. Smith](#), junior forward, Des Moines, IA (16-16-32); and senior defenseman Dylan Zink, Madison, WI (9-18-27).

New Hampshire: [Patrick Grasso](#), freshman forward, Ankeny, IA (17-11-28); and Tyler Kelleher, senior forward, Longmeadow, MA (16-31-47).

Northeastern: Zach Aston-Reese, senior forward, Staten Island, NY (22-22-44); and [Adam Gaudette](#), sophomore forward, Braintree, MA (17-24-41).

Bentley: Kyle Schmidt, junior forward, Menomonee Falls, WI (13-9-22).

Brown: [Sam Lafferty](#) junior forward, Hollidaysburg, PA (8-20-28).

Connecticut: Tage Thompson, sophomore forward, Orange, CT (17-20-27).

Holy Cross: [Danny Lopez](#), junior forward, Barrington Hills, IL (17-13-30)

Maine: [Cam Brown](#), senior forward, Natick, MA (4-26-30).

Vermont: [Stefanos Lekkas](#), freshman goalie, Elburn, IL (23 GP, 56, GA, .912 save pct.)

Yale: [John Hayden](#), senior forward, Greenwich, CT (16-12-28)

“This number of semifinalists matches last year’s, our largest contingent ever for the Walter Brown Award. In some years, one or two candidates have been clear front-runners, even at this stage of the season. But not this year. What happens during the final month of the season, starting tonight at the Beanpot, will have a great impact on the final voting – and it’s probable that the voting will be very close. This is an outstanding and well-matched field of candidates,” said Gridiron Club Hockey Awards Committee chairman **Tim Costello**.

The Gridiron Club will announce the finalists and winner of the 65th Walter Brown Award in March, following league playoffs and before the start of NCAA Tournament play. The award will be presented to the winner at the New England College Hockey Writers’ Dinner on April 11.

Walter Brown Award Winners

1953	Ray Picard	Northeastern	1987	Scott Harlow	Boston College
1954	Bob Babine	Boston College	1988	Brian Leetch	Boston College
1955	Bill Cleary	Harvard	1989	Mike McHugh	Maine
1956	R.J. Cavanaugh	Northeastern	1990	Lane MacDonald	Harvard
1957	Bob Cleary	Harvard	1991	Greg Brown	Boston College
1958	Bob Cleary	Harvard	1992	Dave Emma	Boston College
1959	Mike Karin	Middlebury	1993	Rob Gaudreau	Providence
1960	Art Chisholm	Northeastern	1994	Dave Sacco	Boston University
1961	Tom Martin	Boston College	1995	Jacques Joubert	Boston University
1962	Dave Grannis	Harvard	1996	Mike Grier	Boston University
1963	Bill Hogan	Boston College	1997	Jay Pandolfo	Boston University
1964	Richie Green	Boston University	1998	Chris Drury	Boston University
1965	Bob Gaudreau	Brown	1999	Chris Drury	Boston University
1966	John Cunniff	Boston College	2000	Mike Mottau	Boston College
1967	Jerry York	Boston College	2001	Mike Omicioli	Providence
1968	Tim Sheehy	Boston College	2002	Mike Mottau	Boston College
1969	Paul Hurley	Boston College	2003	Ty Conklin	New Hampshire
1970	Tim Sheehy	Boston College	2004	Brian Gionta	Boston College
1971	Joe Cavanagh	Harvard	2005	Jim Fahey	Northeastern
1972	Bob McManama	Harvard	2006	Mike Ayers	New Hampshire
1973	Tom Mellor	Boston College	2007	Steve Saviano	New Hampshire
1974	Ed Walsh	Boston University	2008	Dov Grumet-Morris	Harvard
1975	Ron Wilson	Providence	2009	Chris Collins	Boston College
1976	Richie Smith	Boston College	2010	John Curry	Boston University
1977	Bob Miller	New Hampshire	2011	Kevin Regan	New Hampshire
1978	Joe Mullen	Boston College	2012	Matt Gilroy	Boston University
1979	Ralph Cox	New Hampshire	2013	Bobby Butler	New Hampshire
1980	Bill Army	Boston College	2014	John Muse	Boston College
1981	Mark Switaj	Boston College	2015	Brett Gensler	Bentley University
1982	Chuck Marshall	Northeastern	2016	Steve Whitney	Boston College
1983	Mark Fusco	Harvard		Johnny Gaudreau	Boston College
1984	Cleon Daskalakis	Boston University		Jimmy Vesey	Harvard
1985	Tim Army	Providence		Jimmy Vesey	Harvard
1986	Scott Fusco	Harvard			

The Walter Brown Award

Commemorating the life and works of America's greatest sportsman, the Walter Brown Award is given annually to the outstanding American-born college hockey player in New England. The Walter Brown Award is the oldest nationally recognized honor accorded to individual players in the sport of American college hockey. Brown coached the United States to its first world hockey championship in 1933. The U.S. team, the Massachusetts Rangers, comprised players from Boston College, Boston University, Harvard, Yale, Dartmouth, Notre Dame, and Boston Commerce High School. The Americans defeated the Toronto National Sea Fleas, coached by Harold Ballard, 2-1 in overtime in the final game of the 1933 World Tournament at Prague, Czechoslovakia. It was also America’s first win over a team from Canada and the first loss ever suffered by the Canadians in international play. The U.S. team members established the Walter Brown award at their 20th reunion in 1953. Criteria for the selection committee include leadership, character, sportsmanship, and ability as well as on-ice achievement. The Gridiron Club of Greater Boston has been the steward of the Walter Brown Award since 1977.

2016-2017 Gridiron Club Hockey Awards Selection Committee and Advisory Board: Tim Costello, Chairman; Joe Bertagna, Tom Burke, Don Cahoon, Jim Connelly, Ned Cully, Dick DeCaprio, Bob DeGregorio, Kevin Fleming, Steve Hagwell, Nancy Marrapese-Burrell, Paul McNamara, and William J. Stewart III.

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