

Northeast Conference

399 Campus Drive • 1st Floor • Somerset, NJ 08873

(732) 469-0440 • Fax (732) 469-0744 • www.northeastconference.org



For Immediate Release
July 7, 2011

Northeast Conference Announces 2011 Spring Scholar-Athlete Award Winners

Somerset, NJ -- The Northeast Conference (NEC) announced its Spring Scholar-Athlete award winners today with Fairleigh Dickinson, Mount St. Mary's and Robert Morris each sporting a pair of honorees. Likewise, Bryant, Central Connecticut State, Sacred Heart and Saint Francis (PA) each had one student-athlete recognized for their work on the field and in the classroom. Bryant tennis player Cristian Balestrieri, EDU golfer Michele Holzwarth and Robert Morris softball player Annie Dubovec were repeat honorees. The impressive group of award recipients also included five winners who have compiled 3.92 or better cumulative grade point averages.

All Scholar-Athlete award winners must have earned a minimum of 60 semester hours, maintained a minimum cumulative GPA of 3.20 and participated with distinction as a member of a varsity team.

Along with the Scholar-Athlete winners, the NEC announced its spring academic honor roll, consisting of 874 student-athletes across 10 league-sponsored spring sports with a 3.20 or better grade point average. Likewise, the league released a 197-member Commissioner's Honor Roll comprised of student-athletes with a 3.75 or higher grade point average.

Over the course of the 2010-11 academic year, a record 2,293 student-athletes landed a spot on the Academic Honor Roll. That figure represents more than half the NEC's competitors. On the year, 510 student-athletes were named to the Commissioner's Honor Roll, also an all-time high for the Conference.

Sacred Heart graduate student **Steve Tedesco (Mission Viejo, CA/Trabuco Hills)** claims the baseball Scholar-Athlete award after he helped lead the Pioneers to their second NEC championship. The first team All-NEC outfielder finished second on the Pioneers and seventh in the league with a .337 average. He also ranked in the NEC top-10 in stolen bases (second with 16), hits (sixth with 68), runs scored (ninth with 39) and doubles (tenth with 13), and drove in 26 runs. Tedesco hit .333 and scored five runs in the NEC Tournament, then rapped out three hits in two NCAA Tournament games. He was named to the *Capital One* Academic All-District second team, adding to his three All-District selections in football. The two-sport athlete ranks among the NEC top-five all-time in nearly every receiving category and was a three-time All-Conference performer on the gridiron. Tedesco, a History major who hails from Mission Viejo, CA, posted a 3.62 undergraduate grade point average and carries a perfect 4.0 GPA in his graduate studies.

Saint Francis (PA) senior **Michael Magalski (Spring Grove, PA/Spring Grove)** closed out his career by winning Scholar-Athlete honors in men's golf. Magalski was tabbed to the All-NEC second team in May, two years after earning first team honors. He shot a four-over 220 over the three-round NEC Championship to finish fourth in a field of 55 golfers. Magalski, who was third at the 2009 NEC event, compiled four top-five finishes on the year and a 74.7 stroke average. He averaged a season-low 71.0 in two rounds at the Leo Keenan Invitational where he shot a low round of 69 and tied for third. Magalski, a Spring Grove, PA native, studied Physical Therapy at Saint Francis and registered a 3.64 grade point average.

(2011 Northeast Conference Spring Scholar-Athlete Release; 1-of-3)

Bryant University (2012-13) • Central Connecticut State University • Fairleigh Dickinson University
Long Island University • Monmouth University • Mount St. Mary's University • Quinnipiac University
Robert Morris University • Sacred Heart University • St. Francis (NY) College
Saint Francis (PA) University • Wagner College

Fairleigh Dickinson has now won four straight Scholar-Athlete awards in women's golf, the last two going to senior **Michele Holzwarth (Berlin, Germany)**. Holzwarth repeated as NEC Golfer of the Year - the third such honor of her storied career - to spark the Knights to a fourth straight NEC championship this past April. She ended the year with four top-three finishes and won the individual title at the Towson Invitational. She also finished third at the ECAC Championships, Rutgers Invitational and Columbia Invitational. Following a 15th place finish at the NEC Championships in Daytona Beach, FL, Holzwarth competed in NCAA Regional play for the fourth time. The Berlin, Germany native was a three-time NEC Player of the Week and posted a league-best 78.2 stroke average. Holzwarth, who was the 2008 NEC Rookie of the Year, concluded her career as a four-time All-NEC competitor. She maintained a 3.93 grade point average as a Management major.

The men's lacrosse Scholar-Athlete award goes to Robert Morris junior midfielder **Kiel Matisz (Stoney Creek, Ontario/Saltfleet)**. Matisz earned a spot on the All-NEC first team for the second straight season after he tied for third on the Colonials with 36 points on 16 goals and a team-high 20 assists. He ranked third in the NEC with 1.33 assists per game to help spark a Robert Morris attack that led Division I in scoring with 13.8 goals per game. One of five Colonials to serve as co-captain this past season, Matisz has racked up 54 goals, 48 assists and 102 points over his three years in Moon Township. He enters his senior campaign tied for third all-time at the school in assists and fifth in scoring. A native of Stoney Creek, Ontario, Matisz majors in Economics. He maintains a 3.70 grade point average.

Mount St. Mary's senior **Aly Jost (Abington, MD/Bel Air)** caps off a terrific year with her selection as women's lacrosse Scholar-Athlete. Jost became the first player in league history to claim two NEC Defensive Player of the Year awards and just the second in conference annals to collect All-NEC first team accolades in each of her four seasons. This past spring she led the Mount with 46 ground balls and 17 caused turnovers, while ranking second with 49 draw controls. Jost's strong play helped land Mount St. Mary's a berth in the NEC title game for the first time since the 2007 season and earned her a spot on the NEC All-Tournament team for the second time in her career. Jost ranks sixth in program history in caused turnovers (83), seventh in ground balls (171) and 10th in draw controls (83). She was recently chosen to the *Capital One* At-Large Academic All-District first team. Jost, an Abington, MD product, is a four-time member of the NEC Academic Honor Roll and Commissioner's Honor Roll. Majoring in Criminal Justice and Sociology, she posted a stellar 3.94 grade point average.

Robert Morris senior **Annie Dubovec (Chagrin Falls, OH/Kenston)** refused to relinquish her grip on the softball Scholar-Athlete prize, winning the award for a second consecutive season. Dubovec became the first softball player in school history to earn a spot on the *Capital One* Academic All-America team with her selection to the first team. She also earned distinction as the second student-athlete in Robert Morris annals to be named to the *Capital One* Academic All-District team three times. On the playing field, the Chagrin Falls, OH product collected the third All-NEC honor of her career and second straight first team accolade after she led the Colonials with 60 hits - the sixth-highest single-season total in school history - and 30 RBI. She ranked sixth in the NEC in hitting (.357 average), third in hits (60) and eighth in homers (six), and feasted on NEC pitching to the tune of a .424 average, .472 on-base percentage and .606 slugging percentage. Dubovec, who started in 104 consecutive games to close out her Colonial career, is one of just two players to play at RMU who rank in the top-six all-time in career batting average (.338), homers (17) and RBIs (91). A semifinalist for the *Lowe's* Senior CLASS Award, Dubovec majored in Mathematics and posted a cumulative 3.92 grade point average.

Bryant's outstanding men's tennis season was due in part to the play of senior **Cristian Balestrieri (Mar Del Plata, Argentina/Mar Del Plata Day School)**, who takes home his second straight NEC Scholar-Athlete award. Balestrieri was named to the All-NEC first team at second singles after posting a 17-8 mark on the year, including 10-3 in #2 flight play. Though ineligible for NEC Tournament play, the Bulldogs went a perfect 6-0 against league rivals as the native of Argentina posted a 5-1 singles record against NEC competition. Balestrieri also earned victories over notable regional rivals from Stony Brook, Villanova and Boston University. He added 10 more wins in doubles, four of which came within the conference. Balestrieri finished with a 54-38 career record in his four years in a Bulldog uniform. Off the court, he was named Vice President of the Beta Gamma Business Honor Society, served as a member of the Bryant Student Senate and was an ICC Jim Thorpe Award recipient as presented by the school's Multicultural Center. Balestrieri was also named Bryant's 2011 Male Athlete of the Year and was voted by the SAAC as the winner of the annual Omar Shareef Spirit Award. He recorded a 3.80 grade point average majoring in Accounting.

Fairleigh Dickinson junior women's tennis player **Elmine Botes (Heidelberg Gauteng, Republic of South Africa/Hoer Volskool and British International Distance College)** was perfect in the classroom and outstanding on the court en-route to Scholar-Athlete honors. Botes, who maintains a perfect 4.0 grade point average as an Electrical Engineering major, was tabbed to the All-NEC second team at #1 singles and All-NEC first team at #1 doubles along with partner Irina Dementyeva. She finished the year 24-14 in singles play - tying her for the most victories in the conference - which included a 5-1 record against league opponents. In doubles, Botes and Dementyeva led the NEC with 27 wins against just seven defeats, and posted an unblemished 7-0 mark versus NEC competition. The Knights advanced all the way to the conference title match, where they lost a hard-fought 4-3 decision to Quinnipiac despite Botes emerging victorious in both her matches on the afternoon. Botes, who hails from the Republic of South Africa, is now a two-time NEC all-star, having earned second team honors at the #2 flight in 2010.

Mount St. Mary's senior **Gigi Gibilisco (Newtown, PA/Notre Dame (NJ))** is this year's recipient of the outdoor track and field Scholar-Athlete award. Gibilisco outclassed the field in the 800 meters at the NEC Outdoor Track & Field Championships, winning the event in a time of 1:51.86. He then qualified for the NCAA East Preliminary Round by posting a time of 1:50.29 at the IC4A Championships, earning All-East honors in the process. The Newton, PA native finished 29th at the NCAA meet, crossing the tape in 1:51.75. Gibilisco, who had previously earned a pair of top-three finishes in NEC Championship meet competition, was a Music major at the Mount. He maintained a 3.75 grade point average.

Central Connecticut State's **Katherine Bossardet (Gales Ferry, CT/Ledyard)** adds one more honor from an outstanding senior campaign, this time taking home Scholar-Athlete plaudits in women's outdoor track and field. Bossardet won the 3,000 meter steeplechase in a meet record time of 11:00.10 at the NEC Outdoor Track & Field Championships in May, beating the field by more than 14 seconds in a dominating performance. She finished her career with three top-four finishes at the annual event. One of Bossardet's most notable attributes was her versatility; she competed in six different events as a senior, posting team-best times in the steeplechase, 3000 meters and 5,000 meters. She was honored at the CCSU senior awards dinner with the Coca-Cola Award, presented to the female student-athlete with the highest grade point average, and the Athletic Director's Award, recognizing her commitment to Blue Devil athletics. Bossardet, a native of Gales Ferry, CT, graduated with a 3.96 grade point average. She majored in English.

2011 Northeast Conference Spring Scholar-Athletes

| Sport | Name | School | GPA | Major |
|-------------------------------|----------------------|---------------------------|----------------------------|------------------------|
| Baseball | Steve Tedesco | Sacred Heart | 4.0 (grad) 3.62 (under) | History |
| Men's Golf | Michael Magalski | Saint Francis (PA) | 3.64 | Physical Therapy |
| Women's Golf | Michele Holzwarth | Fairleigh Dickinson | 3.93 | Management |
| Men's Lacrosse | Kiel Matisz | Robert Morris | 3.70 | Economics |
| Women's Lacrosse | Aly Jost | Mount St. Mary's | 3.94 | Justice/Sociology |
| Softball | Annie Dubovec | Robert Morris | 3.92 | Mathematics |
| Men's Tennis | Cristian Balestrieri | Bryant | 3.80 | Accounting |
| Women's Tennis | Elmine Botes | Fairleigh Dickinson | 4.0 | Electrical Engineering |
| Men's Outdoor Track & Field | Gigi Gibilisco | Mount St. Mary's | 3.75 | Music |
| Women's Outdoor Track & Field | Katherine Bossardet | Central Connecticut State | 3.96 | English |