

Northeast Conference

200 Cottontail Lane • Vantage Court North • Somerset, NJ 08873
(732) 469-0440 • Fax (732) 469-0744 • www.northeastconference.org



For Immediate Release

March 2, 2005

Monmouth's Blake Hamilton Selected NEC Men's Basketball Player of the Year

St. Francis (NY)'s Allan Sheppard Crowned NEC Rookie of the Year

Wagner's DeEarnest McLemore Tabbed NEC Defensive Player of the Year

Long Island's Jim Ferry Earns Jim Phelan Coach of the Year Honors

Somerset, NJ -- Monmouth senior forward **Blake Hamilton (Harrisburg, PA/Central Dauphin)** was named the 2004-05 Northeast Conference Player of the Year in a vote conducted by league head coaches. St. Francis (NY) sophomore swingman **Allan Sheppard (New York, NY/A. Phillip Randolph)** was chosen NEC Rookie of the Year, while Wagner junior guard **DeEarnest McLemore (Dayton, OH/Cary (NC))** claimed NEC Defensive Player of the Year accolades. The Jim Phelan Coach of the Year honor was awarded to Long Island's **Jim Ferry**. The honorees were announced on the eve of the 2005 NEC Basketball Tournament, which begins on Thursday with quarterfinal play at four campus sites.

After narrowly missing out on the award as a junior, Hamilton becomes the second Monmouth player to be bestowed with NEC Player of the Year honors, joining former teammate Rahsaan Johnson, who won it in 2000-01. The Harrisburg, PA native is the centerpiece of Dave Calloway's motion offense and one of the top interior post players in the conference. In leading the Hawks to their second consecutive NEC regular season crown, Hamilton ranks fifth in the league in scoring at 16.2 ppg and is shooting 51.3 percent from the floor. He is also one of the best at getting to the charity stripe as his 170 made free throws this season ranks eighth on the NEC single-season chart. In 2003-04, he hit 214 from the line, the third best year in conference annals. A two-time first team all-NEC performer and the 2004 NEC Tournament Most Valuable Player, Hamilton enters the postseason with 1,400 career points, seventh all-time at Monmouth.

In his first year with the Terriers, Sheppard immediately earned a starting spot with his ability to play the inside-outside game and excel in the up-tempo St. Francis (NY) offensive attack often run to perfection by head coach Ron Ganulin. Long, wiry and athletic, Sheppard paces all NEC newcomers with 11.3 ppg and 51.4 percent shooting from the field. He also ranks second on the Terriers with 4.3 rpg. In January, Sheppard became just the second NEC player in the last 10 years to capture three consecutive Choice Hotels NEC Rookie of the Week awards and finished the regular season with a league-high four to his credit.

One of the best on-the-ball defenders in recent NEC history, McLemore was a near unanimous selection for NEC Defensive Player of the Year honors. He ranks eighth in the league in steals (1.5 spg), and has been one of the defensive sparks in the Seahawks' 9-1 run to close out the regular season. In that span, Wagner has limited opponents to just 56.1 ppg and 33.6 percent shooting from the floor with McLemore shutting down a number of the league's top scorers. The Dayton, OH product joins two former teammates - Nigel Wyatte (2003-04) and Courtney Pritchard (2001-02) - as recent Wagner players who have been recognized for their defensive abilities.

In his third year on the Long Island sidelines, Ferry engineered the league's biggest turnaround in 2004-05 as the Blackbirds finished the season tied for fourth place and earned a quarterfinal home game in the NEC Tournament. Piloting one of the youngest teams in the country - Long Island's roster is composed of six freshman, five sophomores, one junior and one senior - the program's six-game improvement in league play (4-14 in 2003-04 to 10-8 in 2004-05) is not only the best in the NEC this season, but the biggest jump in the conference in four years.

(2004-05 NEC Men's Basketball All-Conference Release; 1-of-4)

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

All five players on the all-NEC first team have previous all-star experience, and all are upperclassman. Aside from Hamilton, the first team consists of Fairleigh Dickinson junior forward **Gordon Klaiber (Greenbelt, MD/National Christian Academy)**, St. Francis (PA) junior guard **Darshan Luckey (Baltimore, MD/Southern)**, Robert Morris senior forward **Chaz McCrommon (Pittsburgh, PA/Schenley)** and Quinnipiac senior guard **Rob Monroe (Lanham, MD/Montrose Christian (Berkshire School (MA)))**.

A two-time first team pick, Klaiber can lay claim to being one of the most versatile players in the league for NEC regular season runner-up Fairleigh Dickinson. He can mix it up on the inside, but at 6'9", is equally adept at beating defenders off the dribble or popping out to the three-point line. Klaiber is currently sixth in the NEC in scoring (16.0 ppg), second in rebounding (8.0 rpg), ninth in steals (1.5 spg) and has hit 41 shots from beyond the arc. He has cracked the 30-point mark on three occasions and compiled seven double-doubles. Klaiber, who hails from Greenbelt, MD, is six rebounds shy of becoming the ninth player in FDU history to reach 1,000 points and 500 boards. His 1,078 career points rank him eighth among active NEC players.

Destined to become one of the most prolific scorers in NEC history, Luckey collects his third all-NEC accolade, including his second first team honor. The Baltimore native, who is one of the league's best at dribble penetration and creating his own shot, improved his game across the board in 2004-05. Luckey is the second leading scorer in the conference at 21.4 ppg, and was even more impressive in league play, putting up 23.4 ppg. Not one dimensional by any means, the former NEC Rookie of the Year is also averaging 5.2 rpg and ranks 10th in the conference with 1.4 spg. Luckey, who is the 10th-leading scorer in the nation, has boosted his career total to 1,674 points, fifth all-time at St. Francis (PA) and 21st on the NEC chart.

Smooth and silky, rather than loud and flashy, is an apt description of McCrommon's multifaceted game, which keeps improving year after year. McCrommon stands third in NEC in scoring (16.9 ppg), fourth in blocks (1.3 bpg), sixth in steals (1.5 spg) and eighth in rebounding (6.1 rpg) as a do-it-all swingman. He has scored in double figures in 35 straight home games dating back to the start of the 2002-03 season. McCrommon, who hails from Pittsburgh, enters tournament play for the third-seeded Colonials with 1,610 career points, third in school history and 31st on the NEC's all-time list. He is also third among active league scorers.

Monroe was the straw that stirred the drink for Quinnipiac this past season. On the court for an ironman-like 39.1 minutes per contest, Monroe played a role in nearly half of the Bobcats made field goals this past season, as his standing as one of the nation's leaders in both scoring (fourth) and assists (16th) would indicate. He is the NEC leader in scoring (22.7 ppg), ranks second in assists (6.7 apg) and free throw shooting (.859), as well as third in three-pointers (2.8/game). A Lanham, MD product, Monroe has posted a league-best 16 outings of 20+ points, six more of 30+ points and is one of only two players nationally with a pair of 40+ point games to his credit. Named one of 18 finalists for the prestigious Bob Cousy Male Collegiate Point Guard of the Year Award, he concluded his career sixth on the NEC career assist list (541) and 20th on the all-time scoring chart (1,685 points). He also ranks first at Quinnipiac in career three-pointers (253), third in assists, fourth in made free throws, sixth in steals and eighth in points.

While the all-NEC first team was composed entirely of repeat honorees, the all-NEC second team features five first-time recipients. There are three backcourt players - St. Francis (NY) senior guard **Tory Cavalieri (Atlantic City, NJ/Atlantic City)**, Fairleigh Dickinson senior guard **Tamien Trent (Moriches, NY/Center Moriches)** and Long Island sophomore guard **James Williams (DeSoto, TX/DeSoto)** - flanked by a pair of frontcourt standouts in Wagner senior center **Sean Munson (Berryville, VA/Clarke County)** and Sacred Heart sophomore forward **Joey Henley (Kent, WA/Kentridge)**.

A consummate floor general who makes all the players around him better, Cavalieri truly is an extension of his coach on the court. Possessing excellent court vision and an ability to control the tempo of a game, the Atlantic City native added a three-point shot to his arsenal this season and has emerged as one of the top offensive talents in the conference. A three-time Choice Hotels NEC Player of the Week honoree in 2004-05, Cavalieri ranks among the NEC top-10 in seven offensive categories: first in steals (2.1 spg), second in 3PPG (2.8/game), third in assists (4.8 apg), fifth in 3PPG% (.429) and seventh in scoring (16.0 ppg), FT percentage (.777) and assist-to-turnover ratio (1.52:1). He has also recorded 589 career assists, both at Maine where he played for one season, and then for the next three years at St. Francis (NY). At St. Francis (NY) alone, Cavalieri has dished out 464 career assists, the second-best entry on the school's all-time assists chart and 19th in league history.

One of the best clutch shooters on the circuit, Trent is one-third of the NEC's highest scoring trio along with teammates Gordon Klaiber and Chad Timberlake. Currently ranked seventh in the conference with 16.0 ppg, Trent excelled against NEC competition, averaging 17.8 ppg. He is also a top-flight distributor of the ball, as his 5.6 apg places him third in the league and 26th nationally. Trent, who calls Moriches, NY his hometown, is a two-time winner of the Choice Hotels NEC Player of the Week award and is currently third in the conference with eight 20+ point outings.

Williams becomes the fifth consecutive NEC Rookie of the Year honoree to use the award as a springboard to all-star recognition the following season. Despite his sophomore status, the Lone Star product is the unquestioned leader of the rising Blackbirds program and ranks fourth in the conference with 16.5 ppg, including 18.3 ppg in league play. Additionally, Williams is fourth in free throw percentage (.808) and three-pointers (2.4/game), as well as 11th in assists (3.4 apg). He is also a marked man as the only Long Island player currently averaging in double-digits.

One of the few true centers in the conference, Munson is as skilled as they come when it comes to post players in the mid-major ranks. A rugged and relentless competitor in the paint, Munson has added a step-back jumper to his repertoire this season, a shot that has made him nearly impossible to guard. He leads the NEC in rebounding and ranks 19th nationally with 9.6 rpg, and is also the Seahawks' top scorer with 12.7 ppg. The only NEC player averaging a double-double in league play with 14.9 ppg and 10.4 rpg, Munson has produced an NEC-high 13 double-doubles, five more than any other competitor. The Berryville, VA native, who was part of Wagner' 2003 title team, is also the NEC's leading active rebounder and ranks 38th in conference history with 627 boards.

An athletically gifted three-sport student-athlete, Henley parlayed a strong showing in the second half of the season into his first all-conference accolade. Named to the NEC all-Rookie team as a freshman, Henley averaged 12.3 ppg and 5.7 rpg in 2004-05, while shooting at a 55.1 percent clip from the floor to rank eighth in the league. Faring even better against NEC competition, he averaged 14.7 ppg, 5.6 rpg and hit a scintillating 61.9 percent of his field goal attempts in league play. Henley, who hails from Kent, WA, caught a team-high 31 passes, including five touchdowns, in his first year on the Pioneer football squad in 2004. He also runs on the outdoor track and field team in the spring, competing in the jumps and hurdles.

The future of the NEC is in good hands when examining the credentials of the 2004-05 NEC all-Rookie team. Joining Sheppard, the NEC Rookie of the Year, is Quinnipiac forward **Karl Anderson (Chester, NY/Don Bosco Prep (NY))**, along with three talented guards. Anderson, who battled injuries for much of the season, filled a needed void in the middle for the Bobcats and finished the season averaging 9.2 ppg. He also ranked second on the team with 5.2 rpg and shot 53.6 percent from the floor. Long Island freshman point guard **Randy Jones (West Palm Beach, FL/Notre Dame Prep)** proved to be a perfect complement to James Williams in what should be the backcourt of the future for the Blackbirds. Jones, a two-time Choice Hotels NEC Rookie of the Week award winner this season, ranks first among NEC freshman and is sixth overall with 3.9 apg. He also averages 9.1 ppg. Robert Morris freshman guard **Tony Lee (Boston, MA/Charlestown)** joins former high school teammate and current Robert Morris backcourt partner Derek Coleman as Boston natives who have been tabbed to the all-Rookie team. Lee is a two-time Choice Hotels NEC Rookie of the Week honoree who averages 7.8 ppg and is third in the conference with 2.0 spg. An absolute terror on the boards despite his 6'0" frame, he has produced four double-doubles in points and rebounds, and stands first among NEC freshman and 14th overall with 5.3 rpg. Rounding out the team is Wagner freshman guard **Mark Porter (Atlantic City, NJ/Atlantic City)**, a three-time recipient of the Choice Hotels NEC Rookie of the Week award. Thrust into the spotlight due to injuries suffered by a number of teammates, Porter has won over Seahawk fans and opponents alike with his poised play in the clutch and one-on-one defensive skills. He leads all NEC freshman with 10.8 ppg and reached double figures in the scoring column in 17 of the final 23 regular season games. Porter also averages 3.4 apg.

2004-05 NEC Men's Basketball Award Winners

Player of the Year

Blake Hamilton	Monmouth	F	6-7	225	Sr	Harrisburg, PA/Central Dauphin
----------------	----------	---	-----	-----	----	--------------------------------

Rookie of the Year

Allan Sheppard	St. Francis (NY)	G/F	6-5	200	So	New York, NY/A. Phillip Randolph
----------------	------------------	-----	-----	-----	----	----------------------------------

Defensive Player of the Year

DeEarnest McLemore	Wagner	G	6-1	185	Jr	Dayton, OH/Cary (NC)
--------------------	--------	---	-----	-----	----	----------------------

Jim Phelan Coach of the Year

Jim Ferry	Long Island
-----------	-------------

2004-05 NEC Men's Basketball First Team All-Conference

Name	School	Pos	Ht	Wt	Yr	Hometown/High School
Blake Hamilton	Monmouth	F	6-7	225	Sr	Harrisburg, PA/Central Dauphin
Gordon Klaiber	Fairleigh Dickinson	F	6-9	205	Jr	Greenbelt, MD/National Christian Academy
Darshan Luckey	St. Francis (PA)	G	6-5	200	Jr	Baltimore, MD/Southern
Chaz McCrommon	Robert Morris	F	6-6	200	Sr	Pittsburgh, PA/Schenley
Rob Monroe	Quinnipiac	G	5-10	160	Sr	Lanham, MD/Montrose Christian (Berkshire School (MA))

2004-05 NEC Men's Basketball Second Team All-Conference

Name	School	Pos	Ht	Wt	Yr	Hometown/High School
Tory Cavaliere	St. Francis (NY)	G	6-0	180	Sr	Atlantic City, NJ/Atlantic City
Joey Henley	Sacred Heart	F	6-4	210	So	Kent, WA/Kentridge
Sean Munson	Wagner	F	6-8	230	Sr	Berryville, VA/Clarke County
Tamien Trent	Fairleigh Dickinson	G	6-0	190	Sr	Moriches, NY/Center Moriches
James Williams	Long Island	G	5-10	170	So	DeSoto, TX/DeSoto

2004-05 NEC Men's Basketball All-Rookie Team

Name	School	Pos	Ht	Wt	Yr	Hometown/High School
Karl Anderson	Quinnipiac	F	6-8	235	Fr	Chester, NY/Don Bosco Prep (NY)
Randy Jones	Long Island	G	5-11	175	Fr	West Palm Beach, FL/Notre Dame Prep
Tony Lee	Robert Morris	G	6-0	180	Fr	Boston, MA/ Charlestown
Mark Porter	Wagner	G	6-2	190	Fr	Atlantic City, NJ/St. Augustine Prep
Allan Sheppard	St. Francis (NY)	G/F	6-5	200	So	New York, NY/A. Phillip Randolph