

Northeast Conference

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For Immediate Release

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Fairleigh Dickinson's Chad Timberlake Selected As Unanimous Pick For NEC Men's Basketball Player of the Year

Robert Morris' Jeremy Chappell Named NEC Rookie of the Year

Mount St. Mary's Mychal Kearsé Crowned NEC Defensive Player of the Year

Central Connecticut State's Howie Dickenman Wins Jim Phelan Coach of the Year Honors

Somerset, NJ -- Fairleigh Dickinson senior guard **Chad Timberlake** (Brooklyn, NY/New Utrecht) was unanimously selected the 2005-06 Northeast Conference Player of the Year in a vote conducted by league head coaches. Robert Morris freshman guard **Jeremy Chappell** (Cincinnati, OH/Northwest) was voted NEC Rookie of the Year, while Mount St. Mary's junior guard **Mychal Kearsé** (Charlotte, NC/Providence Day) claimed NEC Defensive Player of the Year accolades. The Jim Phelan Coach of the Year honor was awarded to Central Connecticut State's **Howie Dickenman**. The honorees were announced on the eve of the 2006 NEC Basketball Tournament, which begins on Thursday with quarterfinal play at four campus sites.

Timberlake becomes the second player in Fairleigh Dickinson annals to be bestowed with NEC Player of the Year honors, joining Desi Wilson, who won the award in 1989-90. The Brooklyn native was the driving force behind the Knights' run to their first conference regular season championship since 1990-91 and accompanying automatic bid to the postseason NIT. Timberlake, who won three of the final five *Choice Hotels* NEC Player of the Week awards to close out the year, ranks in the NEC top-15 in seven individual categories, including fifth in scoring (15.5 ppg), sixth in assists (4.0 apg) and 12th in rebounding (5.4 rpg). The versatile combo guard was outstanding during FDU's stretch run that featured an 11-game winning streak and win over UW-Green Bay in an eBay BracketBusters pool game. During the streak, Timberlake averaged 18.8 ppg, 6.2 rpg and 4.2 apg to help stake his unanimous claim to league MVP honors. Timberlake enters the NEC Tournament as the league's third leading active scorer with 1,338 points.

Chappell took the NEC by storm in his freshman year by winning five *Choice Hotels* NEC Rookie of the Week awards, tying him for the fourth highest total in league history. He also became just the third NEC player in the last 10 years to capture three consecutive weekly honors (December 12, 19 & January 3). A well rounded player, Chappell was inserted into the Colonial starting lineup right from the start and paid immediate dividends for head coach Mark Schmidt. He currently leads all NEC freshman in scoring (13.7 ppg; 11th in NEC), rebounding (5.7 rpg; 11th in NEC), steals (1.9 spg; second in NEC), 3PTFG percentage (.392; eighth in NEC) and blocks (0.9 bpg; seventh in NEC). Chappell joins Steve Vandiver (1986-87) as Robert Morris players tabbed NEC Rookie of the Year.

Kearsé is one of the ringleaders of a Mount St. Mary's defensive unit that ranks second in the conference in scoring defense (66.5 ppg) and has held 14 straight opponents under 70 points, the longest such streak at the school since the 1947-48 Mount team accomplished the feat in 21 straight games. Individually, Kearsé is fifth in the conference with 1.7 steals per contest and is one of the top on-the-ball defenders on the circuit.

In just his tenth season at Central Connecticut State and ninth as a member of the NEC, Dickenman becomes the first coach to be voted Jim Phelan Coach of the Year on three occasions. Picked to finish fifth in the league's preseason coaches poll, Central Connecticut State finished the regular season in second place with a 13-5 league record and 17-10 overall mark. He also has his team peaking at the right time; the Blue Devils take a five-game winning streak into postseason play. Dickenman, who also won the award in 1999-00 and 2001-02, has posted an 10-5 (.667) record in seven previous NEC Tournament appearances, the highest winning percentage among active league coaches and fourth all-time.

(2005-06 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 University • Quinnipiac University
Robert Morris University • Sacred Heart University • St. Francis (NY) College
St. Francis (PA) University • Wagner College

Four of the five players comprising the all-NEC first team are first time all-stars with Long Island junior guard **James Williams (DeSoto, TX/DeSoto)** being the lone repeat honoree. They are joined by Timberlake, Central Connecticut State senior guard **Justin Chiera (Colonia, NJ/Colonia)**, Robert Morris junior forward **A.J. Jackson (Monessen, PA/Monessen)** and Sacred Heart senior center **Kibwe Trim (San Juan, Trinidad/St. Mary's)**.

Williams, the NEC Rookie of the Year in 2003-04 and second team all-NEC pick a year ago, is a consummate floor general and the unquestioned go-to player for head coach Jim Ferry. He ranks third in the NEC in scoring, averaging 16.8 ppg, and has lifted his career point total to 1,226, which ranks 16th on Long Island's scoring chart. The DeSoto, TX native is also second on the circuit and 25th in the country with 3.2 treys per contest, and has hit 41.7 percent of his three-point shots and 82.1 percent from the line, both good for fifth in the NEC.

Chiera will go down as one of the most prolific three-point shooters in the history of the NEC. He is currently tied for third on the league's all-time list with 270 trifectas and is CCSU's all-time and single-season leader in the category. Chiera, who hails from Colonia, NJ, stands sixth among active NEC players with 1,115 points and is eighth in the conference in scoring at 14.5 ppg. He also paces the NEC and ranks 14th in Division I with 3.4 three pointers per contest.

In his first year with the program, Jackson's impact was not only felt at Robert Morris, but throughout the league. One of the most complete players in the NEC with a terrific inside-outside game, Jackson racked up a league-best 14 double-doubles, and ranks second in the NEC in scoring (17.3 ppg) and third in rebounding (9.4 rpg). Hailing from Monessen, PA, he was able to complement his interior game with accurate long range shooting accuracy, hitting 29 three pointers at a 43.3 percent clip over the course of the regular season.

Finally overcoming injuries that had plagued him throughout his Sacred Heart tenure, Trim emerged as the league's dominant post player in his senior campaign. He leads the NEC with 19.1 ppg and 14 double-doubles, while also ranking third in field goal percentage (.625; seventh nationally) and fourth in rebounding (8.7 rpg). Blessed with tremendous lateral quickness for a big man, Trim's 58.6 percent career field goal shooting accuracy is the highest ever at Sacred Heart. A well-rounded student-athlete, the San Juan, Trinidad native was also named an *ESPN The Magazine* Academic All-American this past week.

The all-NEC second team features three first-time recipients, while Fairleigh Dickinson senior forward **Gordon Klaiber (Greenbelt, MD/National Christian Academy)** and Mount St. Mary's senior guard **Landy Thompson (Germantown, MD/Archbishop Spalding)** add to their stockpile of awards. They are flanked by three more upperclassmen - Monmouth junior forward **Marques Alston (Neptune, NJ/Neptune)**, Sacred Heart junior guard **Jarrid Frye (Maspeth, NY/Martin Luther)** and Wagner junior forward **Durell Vinson (Vineland, NJ/St. Augustine Prep)**.

A two-time first team selection, Klaiber has been the centerpiece of Fairleigh Dickinson's basketball renaissance over the last four years. With the ability to stick the three, slash to the hoop or post up, the versatile forward out of Greenbelt, MD ranks seventh in the league in scoring (14.8 ppg), and with his long arms has been a disruptive force on the defensive side of the ball with 1.5 bpg (second in NEC) and 1.6 spg (sixth in NEC). By tallying 1,528 points and 664 rebounds over the course of his career, Klaiber is the ninth player in FDU history to amass 1,000 points and 500 rebounds and just the 23rd player in NEC annals to reach 1,500 points and 500 rebounds.

Thompson, a Germantown, MD native who also achieved second team all-conference status as a sophomore, enters the postseason with 1,730 career points, 16th on the NEC's all-time list and eighth on the Mount chart. He is also fourth on the league's career three pointer list with 266 and in a true testament to his versatile game, has the distinction of being the only player in Mount St. Mary's history to reach 1,700 points, 400 rebounds, 300 assists, 250 three pointers and 150 steals. In 2005-06, Thompson is the tenth leading scorer in the NEC with 14.1 ppg and his 2.5 treys per game rank him sixth on the circuit.

Alston's individual numbers belie his contributions to the Monmouth program, which has finished no lower than third in his three years with the squad. The Neptune, NJ product has earned a well-deserved reputation as a clutch performer, including a career-high 28 point performance and the game-tying shot at the end of regulation in the Hawks' 96-89 double overtime win over FDU on February 20. Alston often sparks Monmouth's balanced scoring attack and ranks second on the club with 12.0 ppg. He also leads the Hawks with 5.1 rpg.

Frye can lay claim to being one of the NEC's most improved players in 2005-06. Forming a terrific one-two scoring punch with Trim - they are the NEC's highest scoring tandem at 35.6 ppg - Frye lifted his scoring average from 8.9 ppg in 2004-05 to 16.5 ppg this season, fourth in the conference. The Maspeth, NY native is a multifaceted player who can play numerous positions, and at 6'4" is also a rebounding force for the Pioneers, averaging 6.5 per game to rank fifth in the NEC.

A relentless inside force for the Seahawks, Vinson proved to be nearly unstoppable in the paint in 2005-06. He ended his year ranked second in the conference and 25th nationally with 9.6 rpg, while his 13 double-double performances are the third best mark in the NEC entering the postseason. Vinson, who hails from Vineland, NJ, is also Wagner's leading scorer and sits sixth in the league with 15.2 ppg. He was even better in league play, finishing with 16.3 ppg and an NEC-high 10.6 rpg.

To see the future of the NEC, one needs to look no further than the 2005-06 NEC All-Rookie team. Joining Chappell, the NEC Rookie of the Year, is Mount St. Mary's freshman forward **Sam Atupem (Newport News, VA/Woodside)**, along with three first-year guards. Atupem was a two-time *Choice Hotels* NEC Rookie of the Week honoree who ranks eighth in the conference in field goal percentage (.507). He filled a needed void in the middle for the Mount and concluded the regular season averaging 7.0 ppg and 3.2 rpg. One of the best pure athletes in the league, Monmouth's **Whitney Coleman (Salem, CT/East Lynne (St. Thomas More Prep (CT)))** was also a two-time weekly award winner. He quickly adapted to Monmouth's intricate motion offense and averages 7.6 ppg, 3.1 rpg and 2.2 apg, while shooting a team-high 46.3 percent from beyond the arc. St. Francis (PA)'s **Marquis Ford (St. Petersburg, FL/St. Petersburg)** earned a starting position midway through the year and solidified his spot by averaging 9.3 ppg, 3.0 rpg and 3.6 apg in conference play. On the season, the point guard finished with 6.9 ppg, 2.3 rpg and 2.8 apg on a young Red Flash team. Rounding out the list is Wagner's **Jamal Smith (Baltimore, MD/Towson Catholic)**, Forced to redshirt last season with injuries, Smith bounced back to average 8.0 ppg and 3.9 rpg for the Seahawks in 2005-06. A pure scorer who at 6'5" can be a difficult matchup for fellow NEC guards, Smith won *Choice Hotels* NEC Rookie of the Week accolades on February 20.

2005-06 NEC Men's Basketball Award Winners

Player of the Year

Chad Timberlake	Fairleigh Dickinson	G	6-4	190	Sr	Brooklyn, NY/New Utrecht
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Rookie of the Year

Jeremy Chappell	Robert Morris	G	6-3	175	Fr	Cincinnati, OH/Northwest
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Defensive Player of the Year

Mychal Kears	Mount St. Mary's	G	6-4	201	Jr	Charlotte, NC/Providence Day
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Jim Phelan Coach of the Year

Howie Dickenman	Central Connecticut State
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2005-06 NEC Men's Basketball First Team All-Conference

Name	School	Pos	Ht	Wt	Yr	Hometown/High School
Justin Chiera	CCSU	G	6-1	181	Sr	Colonia, NY/Colonia
A.J. Jackson	Robert Morris	F	6-6	230	Jr	Monessen, PA/Monessen (E. Tennessee St.)
Chad Timberlake	Fairleigh Dickinson	G	6-4	190	Sr	Brooklyn, NY/New Utrecht
Kibwe Trim	Sacred Heart	C	6-10	230	Sr	San Juan, Trinidad/St. Mary's
James Williams	Long Island	G	5-10	180	Jr	DeSoto, TX/DeSoto

2005-06 NEC Men's Basketball Second Team All-Conference

Name	School	Pos	Ht	Wt	Yr	Hometown/High School
Marques Alston	Monmouth	F	6-4	230	Jr	Neptune, NJ/Neptune
Jarrid Frye	Sacred Heart	G	6-4	190	Jr	Maspeth, NY/Martin Luther
Gordon Klaiber	Fairleigh Dickinson	F	6-9	205	Sr	Greenbelt, MD/National Christian Academy
Landy Thompson	Mount St. Mary's	G	6-1	178	Sr	Germantown, MD/Archbishop Spalding
Durrell Vinson	Wagner	F	6-7	215	Jr	Vineland, NJ/St. Augustine Prep

2005-06 NEC Men's Basketball All-Rookie Team

Name	School	Pos	Ht	Wt	Yr	Hometown/High School
Sam Atupem	Mount St. Mary's	F	6-7	230	Fr	Newport News, VA/Woodside
Jeremy Chappell	Robert Morris	G	6-3	175	Fr	Cincinnati, OH/Northwest
Whitney Coleman	Monmouth	G	6-2	180	Fr	Salem, CT/East Lynne (St. Thomas More Prep (CT))
Marquis Ford	St. Francis (PA)	G	5-11	175	Fr	St. Petersburg, FL/St. Petersburg
Jamal Smith	Wagner	G	6-5	210	Fr	Baltimore, MD/Towson Catholic