

Northeast Conference

399 Campus Drive • 1st Floor • Somerset, NJ 08873
(732) 469-0440 • Fax (732) 469-0744 • www.northeastconference.org



For Immediate Release
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Sacred Heart's Taylor Froelich Voted NEC Player of the Year
Quinnipiac's Heather Schwartzburg Tabbed NEC Pitcher of the Year
Quinnipiac's Jordan Paolucci Chosen NEC Rookie of the Year
Quinnipiac's Ashley Heiberger Selected Defensive Player of the Year
Sacred Heart's Nicole Sidor Named Most Improved Player
Robert Morris Picked as NEC Coaching Staff of the Year

Somerset, NJ - Prior to the first pitch of the 2011 Northeast Conference (NEC) Softball Championship, student-athletes gathered at a pre-tournament banquet to recognize this season's NEC All-Conference award winners. Sacred Heart senior outfielder **Taylor Froelich (Garden Grove, CA/Pacifica)** took the top honor of the night, capping her career by being selected as the NEC Player of the Year. For the first time in five seasons, the Pitcher of the Year award belongs to a student-athlete from an institution other than Long Island. Snapping the Blackbird streak was Quinnipiac ace **Heather Schwartzburg (Mission Viejo, CA/Capistrano Valley)**, who garnered the accolade during a record-breaking junior campaign. QU classmate **Ashley Heiberger (Sioux Falls, SD/Iowa Lakes C.C.)** picked up the Golden Glove award for her defensive performance at the catcher position, while Bobcat freshman **Jordan Paolucci (Lake Mary, FL/Lake Mary)** snagged NEC Rookie of the Year honors. Sacred Heart sophomore utility player **Nicole Sidor (West Vancouver, BC/British Columbia Schools)** claimed NEC Most Improved honors. Rounding out the major award winners are Robert Morris head coach **Craig Coleman** and assistants **Lauren Dickinson** and **Susan Perich**. The trio was voted NEC Coaching Staff of the Year for guiding the Colonials to a 15-5 league slate and the NEC regular season championship. Coleman surpassed the 500-win mark for his career this season, the first coach in RMU history to reach the milestone. Over his tenure as head coach, the Colonials have captured six NEC titles. This marks Coleman's third time as a Coach of the Year and his staff's first.

Froelich has been a force at the plate for Sacred Heart, helping the Pioneers boast the league's leading batting average (.297). Individually, the senior has excelled in the leadoff spot. She is tied for first in the NEC in runs scored (39), while sporting her squad's third-best batting average (.352), slugging percentage (.569), on-base percentage (.408) and RBI total (22). She also paces the Pioneers and ranks second on the circuit with 57 hits, including 12 doubles and six homers. Froelich earned an NEC Player of the Week accolade for a stellar eight-outing stretch at the Rebel Spring Games. This season, Froelich led Sacred Heart to a playoff berth as the #2 seed, while becoming the Pioneers' all-time Division I leader with 203 hits. She also needs just five more total bases to exceed the SHU career mark of 320. A mainstay on the league's annual award slate, Froelich is a three-time All-Conference selection.

Schwartzburg, the 2009 NEC Rookie of the Year, has developed into the league's most formidable pitcher. The linchpin of Quinnipiac's pitching corps, the Bobcats currently pace the conference in opposition batting average (.215) and strikeouts (291). Schwartzburg tossed a whopping 219.1 innings for the Bobcats over the course of the regular season. She tops the conference in multiple statistical categories, including ERA (1.31), opposing batting average (.171), innings pitched (219.1), strikeouts (286), batters struck out looking (82) and wins (22). Additionally, her ERA and strikeouts per seven innings pitched (9.1) sit 22nd in Division I. She has been even better in league play, posting the only sub-1.00 ERA of the circuit at 0.99. The five-time NEC Pitcher of the Week enjoyed the award most recently in the last week of regular season play after breaking the conference's single-season strikeout record. By fanning 286 batters, she surpassed the standard of 276 set in 2001. The junior also eclipsed Quinnipiac's single-season record for wins, which stood at 21. Schwartzburg also nabs a spot on the All-Conference first team for the second year in a row.

Heiberger earns the Golden Glove honor for her handiwork at home plate. The Quinnipiac catcher maintained a steady presence throughout the season, posting a .992 fielding percentage. She committed just one error against conference opponents for a near-perfect

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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

.994 fielding mark. Heiberger also kept a watchful eye on base runners, as she caught 16 players attempting to steal, the most in the league. She is also second on the loop with 333 putouts.

Paolucci, a third baseman for Quinnipiac, returns the NEC Rookie of the Year trophy to Hamden for the fourth time and the third straight year. The young talent led Bobcat batters, hitting .338 (.400 in conference play) and topping the team in runs (35), RBIs (33), homers (14), total bases (97), slugging percentage (.683) and on-base percentage (.486). She is the NEC's top-ranked slugger as her 14 dingers are six more than any other player and broke a 10-year old school record. She also ranks first in total bases and is in the top-three in slugging, on-base percentage, runs and RBIs. She was named NEC Rookie of the Week on two occasions. Paolucci's efforts, which helped the Bobcats to a second straight postseason appearance, also landed her a spot on the All-NEC first team.

Sidor claims the league's Most Improved Player award. The Pioneer had a breakout sophomore season, making the All-Conference First Team as a utility player. A well-deserved honor, Sidor boosted her batting average from .179 in 2010 to .330 this year. Her most notable gains came on offense as she drove in 18 runs, and after failing to record an extra base hit in her rookie season, recorded ten doubles and three home runs. Also potent on the mound, Sidor boosted up her strikeout count from 101 to 150 to rank second in the NEC and 11th in the nation with 10.3 Ks per seven innings. She was named NEC Player of the Week on March 21 for her performance at the Seton Hall Tournament.

Joining Froelich and Sidor on the first team for Sacred Heart is senior **Jen Russell (Seymour, CT/St. Joseph's)**. Russell, the Pioneer ace, is 10-3 against league opponents and sports a 1.98 ERA that lands her second in the NEC. She has tossed seven shutouts this season with four coming in conference matchups. Along with Sidor, the Connecticut product has guided Sacred Heart to the top of the NEC leaderboard for ERA (2.36).

The Colonials put a trio of All-Conference performers on the first team. Representing the Colonials are junior outfielders **Allie Patton (Poland, OH/Poland)** and **Jaci Timko (Houston, PA/Chartiers Houston)** and designated player **Annie Dubovec (Chargin Falls, OH/Kenston)**, a senior. The threesome owns the top-three batting averages on the squad and represent three-of-seven Robert Morris hitters currently batting over .300 at home. Patton leads the way with a .368 average (4th in the NEC), notching 49 hits, 28 runs and 12 RBIs. The junior leads the team with a .408 on-base percentage. Timko has posted the team's highest slugging percentage (.563) and homerun tally (seven). The two-time NEC Player of the Week has posted a .330 batting average, recording 34 hits, 25 runs and 17 RBIs. Dubovec sports the third-most hits (56) in the NEC and ranks first on the Colonials in RBIs (29) and total bases (83), and sits second on the Colonials with a .357 batting average. The senior has made life miserable for league pitchers with a .424 batting average and a .606 slugging percentage.

After narrowly missing out on a tournament berth, Monmouth put a pair of players on the first team. Senior catcher **Emily deLong (Rothschild, WI/DC Everest)** hit a team-best .391 and slammed eight homers. Her batting average stands third in the NEC, while her home run total puts her second. She also paced the Hawks with a .691 slugging percentage, .460 on-base percentage and 29 RBIs. Sophomore **Christine Scherr (Nazareth, PA/Nazareth Area)** excelled at second base, trailing only deLong on the team with a .333 average. She racked up 42 hits and 22 runs, including six doubles and two triples.

Rounding out the first team All-Conference performers are Long Island senior shortstop **Bianca Mejia (Sylmar, CA/Michigan State)** and Fairleigh Dickinson junior first baseman **Caitlin Bradac (Garden Grove, CA/Garden Grove)**. Although their squads didn't advance to postseason play, the players boast the top-two batting averages against league opponents. Mejia, the 2010 NEC Player of Year, hit .500 in league play, while Bradac posted a .467 average. Mejia topped the Blackbirds offensively in hitting (.349), hits (44), runs (24), RBIs (17) and on-base percentage (.500). Bradac led the Knights with a .352 average, 51 hits, 22 runs, 35 RBIs, 12 doubles and five homeruns. The junior climbed to second in the loop for doubles and fourth for RBIs.

Sacred Heart fills out two spots on the second team as senior first baseman **Courtney Lee (Camarillo, CA/Oaks Christian)** and junior designated player **Liz Tsipouras (Simi Valley, CA/Royal)** each claimed a slot. Lee ranks among the circuit's top-five in batting average (.359), slugging percentage (.569), hits (55), runs (36) and RBIs (37). Tsipouras churned out the most RBIs (39) in the NEC and the second-highest batting average (.403). The junior also found her way into the top-five in slugging percentage (.619), on-base percentage (.476) and total bases (86).

Robert Morris pitcher **Alexa Bryson (Greensburg, PA/Latrobe Area)** struck out 152 batters on the year, including 95 in league play, placing her second in the NEC on both accounts. The junior carries a 2.68 ERA over 135.2 innings of work. She has held opposing teams to a .228 batting average. Teammate **Maritza Jimenez (Vineland, NJ/Vineland)** garners second team honors as well. The sophomore is tied for the team lead with 29 RBIs. The third baseman did her best work when it mattered most. Against NEC foes she hit .317 and slugged .350, posting 20 of her 29 RBIs during conference tilts.

From Quinnipiac, **Jacqueline Ristow (Seal Beach, CA/Los Alamitos)** picks up a second team nod for her performance at second base. Ristow has contributed a team-high 52 hits and ranks third in batting average (.301), runs scored (22) and total bases (65). The junior contributed 22 RBIs as well, second on the club.

CCSU freshman outfielder **Arielle Bruno (Millville, NJ/Sacred Heart)** put the Blue Devils on the All-Conference radar, as the outfielder earns a spot on the second team in just her first season. Bruno leads the league in hits (60) and tops her squad in batting average (.349), runs (39) and total bases (81). The rookie was has also stolen eight bases in nine attempts.

Bryant is represented on the second team by freshman shortstop **Aubrey Mable (Aurora, CO/Eaglecrest)**, freshman catcher **Kendall Corder (Carmichael, CA/Del Campo)** and sophomore outfielder **Kate Murray (Fitchburg, MA/Fitchburg)**. Mable, a standout rookie, is the league-leader in four offensive categories, including batting average (.419), slugging percentage (.718), on-base percentage (.514) and doubles (14). Additionally, she led the Bulldogs with 30 RBIs. Corder, a fellow freshman, threw out 13 would-be base stealers. She hit .300 on the year with 36 hits, 25 runs, 25 RBIs and four homeruns. Both Mable and Corder were selected as NEC Rookies of the Week during the regular season. Murray had the Bulldogs' second-highest batting average (.364) and on-base percentage (.443).

Capping the All-Conference second team are players from Monmouth, Mount St. Mary's and Fairleigh Dickinson. **Lauren Sulick (Canfield, OH/Canfield)** headed up the MU pitching staff, recording the NEC's second-lowest ERA (1.46) and opposing batting average (.197) in league play. Sulick, a junior, took the mound for 219 innings this season, collecting 19 wins and tossing 127 strikeouts. Mount St. Mary's junior outfielder **Courtney Zingle (Ambler, PA/Hatboro-Horsham)** spearheaded the Mountaineer offense, sporting a .333 batting average and .466 slugging percentage. She amassed a team-high 69 total bases and ranked second with 25 RBIs. Fairleigh Dickinson sophomore utility player **Maire Shaughnessy (Culpeper, VA/Highland)** was a valuable asset to the Knights on both offense and defense. She batted .281 with 39 hits, including 11 doubles, four triples and two homeruns. As a utility player, Shaughnessy doled out the fourth-most assists in the league (97). She also made 23 appearances on the mound, spanning 125 innings. The sophomore posted a 10-5, record, 2.30 ERA and fanned 66 batters.

2011 NEC Softball Award Winners

Player of the Year

Taylor Froelich Sacred Heart OF Sr. Garden Grove, CA/Pacifica

Pitcher of the Year

Heather Schwartzburg Quinnipiac P Jr. Mission Viejo, CA/Capistrano Valley

Rookie of the Year

Jordan Paolucci Quinnipiac 3B Fr. Lake Mary, FL/Lake Mary)

Defensive Player of the Year - Golden Glove Award

Ashley Heiberger Quinnipiac C Jr. Sioux Falls, SD/Iowa Lakes C.C.

Most Improved Player

Nicole Sidor Sacred Heart UT So. West Vancouver, BC/British Columbia Schools

Coaching Staff of the Year

Robert Morris

2011 NEC Softball All-Conference First Team

<u>Name</u>	<u>School</u>	<u>Pos</u>	<u>Yr</u>	<u>Hometown/High School</u>
Heather Schwartzburg	Quinnipiac	P	Jr.	Mission Viejo, CA/Capistrano Valley
Jen Russell	Sacred Heart	P	Sr.	Seymour, CT/St. Joseph's
Emily deLong	Monmouth	C	Sr.	Rothschild, WI/DC Everest
Caitlin Bradac	Fairleigh Dickinson	1B	Jr.	Garden Grove, CA/Garden Grove
Christine Scherr	Monmouth	2B	So.	Nazareth, PA/Nazareth Area
Jordan Paolucci	Quinnipiac	3B	Fr.	Lake Mary, FL/Lake Mary
Bianca Mejia	Long Island	SS	Sr.	Sylmar, CA/El Camino Real
Allie Patton	Robert Morris	OF	Jr.	Poland, OH/Poland
Jaci Timko	Robert Morris	OF	Jr.	Houston, PA/Chartiers Houston
Taylor Froelich	Sacred Heart	OF	Sr.	Garden Grove, CA/Pacifica
Annie Dubovec	Robert Morris	DP	Sr.	Chagrin Falls, OH/Kenston
Nicole Sidor	Sacred Heart	UT	So.	West Vancouver, BC/British Columbia Schools

2011 NEC Softball All-Conference Second Team

<u>Name</u>	<u>School</u>	<u>Pos</u>	<u>Yr</u>	<u>Hometown/High School</u>
Lauren Sulick	Monmouth	P	Jr.	Florence, NJ/Florence Township
Alexa Bryson	Robert Morris	P	Jr.	Seymour, CT/St. Joseph's
Kendall Corder	Bryant	C	Fr.	Woodline, WA/Bishop Blanchet
Courtney Lee	Sacred Heart	1B	Sr.	Burbank, CA/Burbank Burroughs
Jacqueline Ristow	Quinnipiac	2B	Jr.	Woodinville, WA/Woodinville
Maritza Jimenez	Robert Morris	3B	So.	Norco, CA/Riverside Christian
Aubrey Mable	Bryant	SS	Fr.	Olympia, WA/Capital
Kate Murray	Bryant	OF	So.	Milton, MA/Milton
Arielle Bruno	Central Conn. St.	OF	Fr.	Houston, PA/Chartiers-Houston
Courtney Zingle	Mount St. Mary's	OF	Jr.	Garden Grove, CA/Pacifica
Liz Tsipouras	Sacred Heart	DP	Jr.	McKees Rocks, PA/Montour
Maire Shaughnessy	Fairleigh Dickinson	UT	So.	Sylmar, CA/Sylmar