

Northeast Conference

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For Immediate Release

November 18, 2007

Long Island Claims Fourth Straight NEC Tournament Title

Blackbirds' Shelby Heggie Named NEC Tournament MVP

Brooklyn, NY -- With a 3-0 (30-21, 30-22, 30-18) sweep of Robert Morris, the Long Island University volleyball team secured its fourth straight Northeast Conference Championship in front of a raucous crowd at the Wellness, Recreation and Athletic Center. The Blackbirds hit .385 en route to securing the conference's automatic bid to the NCAA Tournament.

From the outset, the Colonials showed that a fourth title for Long Island would not be easily had. Robert Morris (18-11) put up a strong fight in the first game, going toe to toe with the Blackbirds attack. With the game tied 11-11, Long Island senior **Martina Wagner (Friedrichshafen, Germany/Georgia)** rattled off three straight aces to swing the momentum in her team's favor. From there, the Blackbirds kept Robert Morris at a safe distance to earn a 30-21 win.

The second game started out tight as well, but Long Island used a quick four-point run with junior **Jasmine Perez (Kingwood, Texas/Kingwood)** serving to build a 10-5 lead. Robert Morris tried to scrape its way back, but the Blackbirds' persistence prevailed. With Long Island leading 26-19, the teams went on a long, spirited volley with both the Colonials and the Blackbirds making terrific plays to extend the run. Long Island junior **Martina Racic (Pula, Croatia/School of Arts)** finally ended the two-minute play with an aggressive kill that brought the Wellness Center crowd to its feet. The Blackbirds went on to capture the second game, 30-22.

In the third stanza, Long Island used a six-point scoring streak to take a 15-6 lead. The Colonials were forced to burn their two timeouts early and the Blackbirds kept Robert Morris' feet to the flame, increasing the lead to 24-13. Racic put together three straight kills to close out the game, 30-18, and give Long Island the win.

The Blackbirds outhit Robert Morris by a 53-35 margin. The Colonials hit .098 for the match and were led by senior **Emily Wolthuis (Byron Center, MI/South Christian)** and junior **Cassie Lee (Vista, CA/Vista)**, who each turned in eight kills. Racic finished with a match-high 14 kills while hitting .462. Wagner added 12 kills and NEC Player of the Year **Shelby Heggie (Laramie, WY/Northeastern J.C.)** chipped in 11. NEC Libero of the Year **Svetlana Simic (Klek, Serbia/Commercial School)** tallied a mach-high 20 digs. Senior **Jennifer Stambaugh (Union Bridge, MD/Francis Scott Key)** led Robert Morris with 10 digs.

2007 NEC Volleyball Tournament

Hosted by Long Island

University

Brooklyn, NY

First Round

Saturday, November 17

#5 SFPA def. #4 FDU 3-2

#3 RMU def. #6 SHU 3-0

Semifinals

Saturday, November 17

#1 LIU def. #5 SFPA 3-0

#3 RMU def. #2 CCSU 3-1

Championship

Sunday, November 18

#1 LIU def. #3 RMU 3-0

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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

Heggie was named the NEC Tournament Most Valuable Player, earning a spot on the All-Tournament Team with Racic and senior **Lindsey Patty (Edmund, Okla./Univ. of Arkansas-Fort Smith)**, who tallied 41 assists in the match. Robert Morris was represented by Graham, Lee and senior **Tawnya Storino (Pittsburgh, PA/Baldwin)**.

The field of the NCAA Tournament will be announced on Sunday, Nov. 25 on ESPN.

All-Tournament Team

<u>Name</u>	<u>Pos.</u>	<u>Year</u>	<u>Hometown</u>
Amanda Graham	MB	Fr.	Melbourne, FL/Eau Gallie
Cassie Lee	OH/OPP	Jr.	Vista, CA/Vista
Tawnya Storino	S	Sr.	Pittsburgh, PA/Baldwin
Shelby Heggie*	MB	Sr.	Laramie, WY/Northeastern J.C.
Lindsey Patty	S	Sr.	Edmond, OK/Arkansas Fort-Smith
Martina Racic	MB	Jr.	Pula, Croatia/School of Arts

* Denotes Tournament MVP