Northeast Conference

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For Immediate Release
March 22, 2009
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2009 Northeast Conference Bowling Championships

Firing on All Cylinders, Fairleigh Dickinson Captures Inaugural NEC Crown

Elmwood Park, NJ - It was a weekend-long progression for Fairleigh Dickinson, one that ended with the Knights becoming the inaugural Northeast Conference Bowling Champions.

Third-seeded FDU swept past top-seeded Kutztown, 4-0 [223-142, 221, 126, 232-167, 199-181], in the 2009 NEC Championship Match on Sunday at Parkway Lanes. All matches at the first-ever Conference Championship followed a best-of-seven baker game format.

"We built momentum as the event continued," commented Fairleigh Dickinson head coach Michael LoPresti whose team will go before the NCAA Selection Committee sporting an overall 111-27 (.804) record. "We just kept getting better and better all the way through to the climax."

Before the Knights could think about celebrating, they had to successfully navigate through a championship bracket that featured five of the nation's top-20 teams according to the latest edition of the National Tenpin Coaches Association Top 20 Poll.

The Knights outlasted No. 16 Adelphi in seven games and needed only four games to sweep past No. 19 St. Francis (NY) on the Tournament's first day. Adelphi received a grudge match opportunity when it faced FDU again on Sunday, but by that time the Knights were locked into a groove.

"It started with Erica Perez [on Saturday] and by the end we were firing on all cylinders," LoPresti said.

Fairleigh Dickinson's arsenal, which includes three all-NEC bowlers, did not need much time to warm up on Sunday morning. The Knights were firing fast out of the gate against both Adelphi and later Kutztown. They rolled a 233-pin baker game to open an eventual 4-1 series win over AU before starting their sweep of KU with a 223-pin baker performance.

FDU's first four frames of its championship match against Kutztown consisted of a strike, 9-spare, strike, and another 9-spare. The Knights' two strikes in the first three frames of a 223-142 game one victory would turn out to be more than 25 percent of Kutztown's entire strike total for the match. The talented, but young Bears, totaled only seven strikes during four baker games on the championship stage.

"We're young and we had never been here before," said Kutztown head coach Joe Ambrose, whose program is only in its second season of existence. "FDU was outstanding and we ran out of gas by the end of a long season."

Game two resulted in more of the same frustration for the young Kutztown team. Fairleigh Dickinson notched a strike followed by four 9-spare frames the first time through the order while Kutztown did not make its first mark until the sixth frame. FDU left little room for KU to catch up as it rolled five straight strikes the second time down the lineup, the fifth of which came from all-NEC first team selection **Erica Perez (Carteret, NJ/Carteret)**.

(FDU Takes 2009 NEC Championship; 1-of-3)

Perez went 15-for-29 during strike opportunities in the two victories on Sunday, the second day of her power surge. After leaving two empty frames in a game one loss to Adelphi in the Knights first match of the Tournament on Saturday, an eventual 4-3 series win, the all-NEC anchor exploded to strike 16 times over her final 22 chances.

Sunday's competition began with three teams holding out hope for the title. Third-seeded Fairleigh Dickinson held the edge over top-seeded Kutztown and No. 4 seed Adelphi as it was the lone team to make it through early round play undefeated.

Adelphi was the first of the three to fall. FDU took responsibility for eliminating the Panthers, 4-1, in the first best-of-seven baker match of the day.

Fairleigh Dickinson appeared to be (focused) in championship form right from the start. Adelphi began the match by registering a 9-spare, strike, 9-spare, and another strike over its first four frames, but the Panthers' impressive start was only modest compared to that of FDU.

"We wanted to make a statement out of the gate and take control right away," said head coach Michael Lopresti. "The ladies did just that."

The Knights struck six consecutive frames to open the contest on the way to a 233-187 first game victory with junior **Nichole Toto (Piscataway, NJ/Bishop George Ahr)** doubling at the top of the lineup.

Facing elimination and down two games to none, Adelphi rallied in its third baker game against FDU. The Panthers trailed by three pins heading into the ninth frame before its two NEC all-rookie honorees stood up. Freshman **Danielle Merino (College Point, NY/St. Francis Prep)** rolled a ninth-frame strike to set up second team all-league bowler **Erica Drake (Miller Place, NY/Floral Park)** who doubled in the tenth to solidify a 210-184 victory.

Fairleigh Dickinson responded right back in game four to take a commanding 3-1 series lead. FDU sophomore **Sara Litteral (Chesterfield, MI/L'anse Creuse North)** all but sealed the 209-151 baker win with her strike in the ninth frame before Perez delivered an exclamation point with her Turkey in the 10th.



BRACKET B

Preliminary Round	Round 1	Round 2	Round 3	Round 4	Championship Round
6 St. Peter's 4 (173,183,166,207) Sat 9AM (88,112,159,127) **7 Long Island** 0	**1 Kutztown** 4 (191,203,150,192,135,168) M1 Sat 10:30AM (183,173,217,169,197,161) **6 St. Peter's** 2	**4 Adelphi** 4 (184,200,191,172) M4 Sat Noon (160,155,178,152) **1 Kutztown** 0	**4 Adelphi** 4 (153,243,193,192,169,168) M7 Sat 1:30PM (202,177,165,162,176,166) **6 St. Peter's** 2		
	2 Sacred Heart 2 (148,155,178,142,155,161) M2 Sat 10:30AM (183,146,189,139,170,170) **5 St. Francis NY** 4	**5 St. Francis NY** 0 (202,137,197,164) M5 Sat Noon (209,167,201,224) **3 Fairleigh Dickinson** 4		**3 Fairleigh Dickinson** 4 (233,192,184,209,183) M9 Sun 10AM (187,164,210,151,168) **4 Adelphi** 1	**3 Fairleigh Dickinson** 4 (233,221,232,199) M10 Sun Noon M11Sun 1:30pm if necessary (142,126,167,181) **1 Kutztown**
	3 Fairleigh Dickinson 4 (163,228,178,197,158,181,203) M3 Sat 10:30AM (168,202,198,170,157,241,162) **4 Adelphi** 3		**1 Kutztown** 4 (178,186,185,209) M8 Sat 1:30PM (133,140,154,179) **5 St. Francis** 0		**Fairleigh Dickinson** **Champions**
		6 St. Peter's 4.5 (169,131,192,171,147,192,169) M6 Sat Noon (169,175,197,158,190,156,164) **2 Sacred Heart** 2.5			
			BYE **Winner M5**	**BYE** **Higher seeded remaining team**	

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