Northeast Conference

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

For Immediate Release
March 21, 2010
Contact: Ralph Ventre (ext. 7)

Sacred Heart Conquers 2010 Northeast Conference Bowling Championship

Pioneers Stage Title Match Comeback to Deny Fairleigh Dickinson Repeat's Bid

Elmwood Park, NJ - Sacred Heart stormed back to capture the Northeast Conference Bowling Championship in dramatic fashion.

Trailing defending champion Fairleigh Dickinson by a 3 to 1 margin in the best-of-seven baker game title match, the Pioneers responded by forcing a 3.5 to 3.5 tie and won the subsequent modified baker roll-off tiebreaker to claim the NEC Tournament crown.

With the conference title coming down to a five-frame roll-off, the tension was building in Parkway Lanes.

Sacred Heart's **Marissa Gagliardi (North Branford, CT/North Branford)** and **Sarah Pelletier (Lewiston, ME/Lewiston)**, both of whom made the All-NEC Second Team, admitted to their coach that they were a bit nervous, but it definitely didn't show.

"Marissa and Sarah said they were nervous, but nothing ever seems to faze those two," said SHU head coach Becky Kregling.

SHU sophomore **Savannah Zientara (Lewiston, NY/Lewiston Porter)**, who threw 10 strikes in 15 attempts during the title match, was unable to clean up a split and left the first frame of the tiebreaker open.

Freshman teammate **Jackie Carbonetto (Blauvelt, NY/Tappan Zee)** spared the second frame followed by a strike from rookie **Jackie Willy (Clarance, NY/Lewiston Porter)**, who came off the bench back in game four.

Next, it was Gagliardi's turn. Unfazed, the senior, who filled 23 of 25 frames bowled during the day, took down all 10 pins to set up Pelletier in the anchor position.

Two strikes from Pelletier was all the Pioneers would need to put the match out of reach and a double is just what the all-NEC bowler delivered. Sacred Heart won the roll-off by a 118-106 margin and the celebration ensued.

"They were all under a lot of pressure, but they all made good shots. I was very impressed," said Kregling.

Both No. 5 seed Fairleigh Dickinson and No. 6 seed Sacred Heart entered Sunday's semifinal round unbeaten in tournament play after each posted a pair of wins on Saturday. Meanwhile, their opponents - No. 4 seed Adelphi and No. 2 seed Kutztown - had already suffered one loss in the double-elimination tournament, which consisted strictly of best-of-seven baker matches.

FDU topped Adelphi, 4 to 2, to eliminate the Panthers and earn its second consecutive appearance in the NEC Championship final round. Meanwhile Sacred Heart's 4-to-1 win over Kutztown sent the Golden Bears home and set up the title tilt.

(2010 NEC Bowling Championship- SHU Wins; 1-of-2)

"We came into this thing knowing we had a chance to win," said Kregling. "We had a slow start to the season, but we've been bowling well since January."

Fairleigh Dickinson came up short in its bid to win a second straight title after winning the inaugural NEC crown last March at Parkway Lanes.

"Sometimes the hardest thing to do in sports in repeat and that held true today for us, unfortunately," said FDU head coach Mike LoPresti. "I'm proud of how we performed all weekend. We fought hard and came up just a little short. We had some spectacular performances all weekend long and that is why we were playing for the title again."

Owning a 79-34 overall record, Fairleigh Dickinson will be hoping to hear its name called when the NCAA Championship bracket is announced on Wednesday, March 24 at 4:00 pm.

FDU, which advanced to the NCAA Final Four last season, has qualified for the national championship tournament in five of the past six seasons.

The 2010 NCAA Bowling Championship is set for April 8-10 at Brunswick Zone Carolier Lanes in North Brunswick, New Jersey. It will be the first one the NCAA has ever held in the bowling-rich Mid-Atlantic region. NEC member New Jersey City has been selected as the pre-determined tournament host.

Championship Match
#6 Sacred Heart 3.5, #5 Fairleigh Dickinson 3.5 (*SHU wins modified baker roll-off)
(189-216, 222-185, 189-202, 167-177, 192-174, 204-204, 212-188, 118-106*)

Match 12 (Semifinal Round)
#6 Sacred Heart 4, #2 Kutztown 1
(177-200, 205-192, 193-191, 178-157, 186-182)

Match 11 (Semifinal Round)
#5 Fairleigh Dickinson 4, #4 Adelphi 2
(221-173, 202-212, 202-181, 161-181, 215-179, 208-180)