

# Northeast Conference

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For Immediate Release

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## Quinnipiac's Bryan Sabatella Named NEC Baseball Player of the Year

## Sacred Heart's Jay Monti Chosen NEC Pitcher of the Year

## *Mount St. Mary's Josh Vittek Tabbed NEC Rookie of the Year*

## *Sacred Heart's Nick Giaquinto Selected NEC Coach of the Year*

**Somerset, NJ** -- On the eve of the 2005 Northeast Conference Baseball Tournament, the league announced its year-end all-conference award winners in balloting conducted by head coaches. Quinnipiac junior first baseman **Bryan Sabatella (Wading River, NY/Shoreham Wading River)** was the unanimous choice as NEC Player of the Year. Sacred Heart was the recipient of two awards, as sophomore **Jay Monti (Marlboro, NY/Marlboro)** was named NEC Pitcher of the Year and **Nick Giaquinto** was unanimously picked by his peers as NEC Coach of the Year. NEC Rookie of the Year accolades went to Mount St. Mary's freshman outfielder **Josh Vittek (Eldersburg, MD/Liberty)**. Monmouth, Quinnipiac and Wagner tied for league-high honors with four players apiece named to all-NEC teams.

The major award winners were announced, along with the first and second all-NEC teams, at a banquet held at FirstEnergy Park in Lakewood, New Jersey. The four-team, double-elimination NEC Tournament will be contested at FirstEnergy Park over the next three days, culminating in the championship on Sunday, May 22nd. First round tournament pairings on Friday afternoon pit #2 seed Sacred Heart against #3 seed Monmouth at 10:00 am, followed top-seeded Quinnipiac taking on #4 seed Wagner at 1:30 pm.

Sabatella, who developed into a franchise player for the NEC regular season champion Bobcats, emerged as a bonafide Triple Crown candidate in 2005. Sabatella, a two-time NEC Player of the Week, ranks first in the conference with a .421 average and 11 homers, and with 34 RBI has moved to within two of league leader Andrew Meyers of Monmouth. With a big tournament, he can join former Long Island star Sal Conti (1990) as the only players in NEC history to win the Triple Crown. The Wading River, NY native also ranks first in the conference in hits (67), total bases (113), on-base percentage (.474) and slugging percentage (.711). A first team all-NEC pick in 2004, Sabatella's season began to take shape in April, when he shot to the top of a number of NEC statistical categories by hitting .578 with five homers and 37 hits in 17 games. He finished the regular season in his own stratosphere in NEC play with a .450 average, eight homers and an .838 slugging percentage. Sabatella becomes the second Quinnipiac player to receive NEC Player of the Year honors, joining Nate Noyes, who won in 2000.

As consistent as they come, Monti has been practically unhittable the entire season for the Pioneers, who set a school record with 16 league wins in 2005. Utilizing a low 90's fastball and wicked slider, he baffled NEC hitters, giving up two or less runs in six of his eight conference starts. Monti leads the NEC with seven wins (7-5) - all coming in league play - and also ranks first with eight complete games and three shutouts. He has held batters to a paltry .221 average, the third best mark in the conference, and also stands fourth with a 2.47 ERA. Sporting pinpoint accuracy, Monti has issued just 10 free passes in 73.0 innings pitched. The Marlboro, NY product has been even stingier against conference hitters, walking just four batters in 55.2 innings and posted a 2.26 ERA to rank fifth in the conference. Monti is Sacred Heart's first-ever NEC Pitcher of the Year winner.

Vittek sparkled in his freshman campaign, establishing himself as a prolific hitter from the outset for Mount St. Mary's, which narrowly missed qualifying for the NEC Tournament. Vittek leads all NEC freshmen with a .358 average and ranks fifth overall in the conference in hitting. He also finished second on the Mount with 28 RBI and a .587 slugging percentage, while his five homers stood third on the club. Vittek, who hails from Eldersburg, MD, was even better in NEC play, hitting .386 to rank fourth on the circuit. One of just two freshman to earn all-league honors this season, the second team all-star makes it back-to-back NEC Rookie of the Year award winners for the Mount. Teammate Dustin Pease was tabbed the league's top rookie in 2004.

(NEC Baseball 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

Giaquinto's selection by league head coaches as NEC Coach of the Year is a well-deserved honor for the veteran skipper, now in his 18th season at the helm of the Sacred Heart program. Picked eighth in the NEC Preseason Coaches Poll, Giaquinto led the pitching-rich Pioneers to a school record 16 conference wins and their first postseason appearance since joining the conference in 1999. After a 4-2 start, Sacred Heart reeled off six straight NEC victories in mid-April to take over first place, a spot the Pioneers occupied until the final week of the regular season. The key to the team's success: a 12-game stretch that saw Pioneer hurlers allow just 13 earned runs over 92 innings (a 1.27 ERA) in compiling an 11-1 record against league competitors. Entering the NEC Tournament, the Sacred Heart staff has posted a 2.81 earned run average within the conference and ranks first on the circuit with five shutouts. Giaquinto has now won 313 games at the Fairfield, CT school.

Nine additional honorees join major award winners Bryan Sabatella (first base) and Jay Monti (pitcher) on the all-NEC first team. The first team features a near complete turnover from last season with Sabatella being the only repeat honoree.

Wagner junior **Joe Malfettano (Toms River, NJ/Toms River North)** claims first team honors at second base. A .307 hitter during the regular season, Malfettano leads the Seahawks and ranks third in the conference with 34 RBI. He was the league's second-leading run producer in NEC play with 22 RBI in 23 games, and also hit .357 during conference games.

Long Island junior **Nate Olson (Poland, ME/Central Maine CC)** is the first team all-NEC recipient at third base. Olson was the third-leading hitter for the Blackbirds in 2005, finishing with a .301 average. He also ranked second on the club with a .398 on-base percentage and stole six bases in as many attempts.

Sacred Heart shortstop **Ryan Nemcek (Endwell, NY/Maine-Endwell)** becomes the first non-pitcher to nab first team all-NEC accolades as a freshman since Rider's Jason Koehler in 1994. Nemcek leads the team with a .322 average and 31 runs scored, and his .421 on-base percentage is the eighth-best mark in the conference. A terrific table-setter for the Pioneers, he also teed-off against league pitching, ranking in the NEC top-10 in hitting (.366; ninth), runs (25; second) and on-base percentage (.485; third).

Quinnipiac sophomore **Tim Binkoski (North Haven, CT/North Haven)** leads off the first team all-NEC outfield. Binkoski and fellow first teamer Sabatella are a terrific one-two punch in the middle of a Bobcats' lineup that ranks second in the league in runs per game. He laced an NEC-best 15 doubles during the regular season and is sixth in the NEC with a .352 average. Binkoski has also belted four homers and driven in 25 runs.

Central Connecticut State senior **Tom Pezzello (Waterford, CT/Waterford)** corrals first team honors in the outfield following a terrific senior campaign. A well-rounded player, Pezzello is currently seventh in the conference in hitting with a .351 average, and also ranks second in walks (25) and fourth in hits (54) and on-base percentage (.443). Additionally, he stole ten bases without getting thrown out. Pezzello tore up NEC pitching to the tune of a .407 average, second in the loop.

Monmouth senior **Fran Rotella (Secaucus, NJ/St. Peter's Prep)** claims the final first team all-NEC outfield spot. One of the top power hitters in the conference, he blasted seven homers and compiled a .550 slugging percentage during the regular season to rank third and fourth in the NEC, respectively, in the two categories. Rotella, a .321 hitter, enhanced his all-star credentials by drawing 23 walks (seventh in league) en-route to a .426 on-base percentage (also seventh).

Central Connecticut State junior **Scott Appleton (Bloomfield, NJ/Bloomfield)** is the first team choice at catcher. Following in the footsteps of three-time first team all-star Tim D'Aquila, Appleton made the most of his opportunity to start in 2005. He led the Blue Devils and ranked among NEC leaders in a host of categories with 15 doubles (first in NEC), six homers (sixth) and 33 RBI (seventh). Appleton batted .294 on the season, but raised his level of play during conference tilts, hitting .365. He also threw out 14 runners attempting to steal.

Wagner senior designated hitter **Troy Sogluizzo (Staten Island, NY/Curtis)** makes his initial first team appearance, though he did earn second team recognition as a sophomore back in 2003. Sogluizzo is one of the ringleaders of a potent Wagner lineup that has posted a league-high .297 average. He had his typical productive year at the plate and currently stands third on the circuit with a .362 average, while also ranking first in doubles (15), third in on-base percentage (.444) and fourth in runs scored (34). Sogluizzo has also knocked in 28 runs and swatted three homers.

Joining Monti as one of the two first team all-NEC pitchers is his Sacred Heart teammate, junior **Chris Aldrich (Medway, MA/Medway)**. A southpaw who baffles hitters with an assortment of breaking pitches and steady stream of sliders, Aldrich dominated NEC opponents, going 5-1 with a 2.21 ERA, the fifth-best mark in the conference. Overall, he enters the playoffs with a 6-3 mark and his 2.14 ERA is second in the loop. The league leader with 82 strikeouts, Aldrich has tossed two shutouts and gone the distance on five occasions.

The all-NEC second team includes three repeat all-stars, as Mount St. Mary's junior first baseman **Eric Smith (Marlton, NJ/St. Joseph's Prep (PA))**, Monmouth junior second baseman **Nick Massari (Trenton, NJ/Hamilton West)** and Wagner junior outfielder **Nick Papa (Freehold, NJ/Freehold)** each make their second all-star appearance. Smith came on like gangbusters during the league portion of the schedule, hitting .411 with six home runs, while establishing NEC-leading figures with 27 runs and 26 RBI. One of the premier sluggers in the conference, he wrapped up his year ranked second in the NEC in homers (nine), runs (39), RBI (35) and slugging percentage (.631), while also hitting .362 (fifth). Massari ranks among the NEC top-10 in eight individual statistical categories, including first in triples (four) and third in RBI (34). He has also showed some pop in his bat with five homers, while hitting .313. Papa enters the postseason with a .331 average and has scored 29 runs. He is also fifth in the NEC with 12 stolen bases. St. Francis (NY) senior third baseman **Tom Curry (Brooklyn, NY/Xaverian)** drove in a team-high 20 runs for the Terriers, while hitting .267 and stroking eight doubles. Curry's teammate, senior shortstop **Greg Colonna (Staten Island, NY/Msgr. Farrell)**, wreaked havoc on the basepaths for the Terriers, and currently leads the NEC with 18 stolen bases in 20 attempts. He ended his senior campaign with a .321 average and 45 hits, both second on the club. Wagner claimed two of the three second team all-NEC outfield spots with sophomore **Matt Mastrianni (Ringo, NJ/Hunterdon Central)** joining Papa and the Mount's Josh Vittek, the NEC Rookie of the Year. Mastrianni has crossed the plate 36 times, third most in the league, while hitting .309 with two homers, 26 RBI and 23 walks for the Seahawks. Monmouth junior catcher **Mike Hussa (Denville, NJ/Seton Hall Prep)** has gunned down 14 runners on the season, and is hitting .333 with 14 doubles, both team-highs that rank him eighth and fourth, respectively, in the NEC. He has also crossed the plate 30 times and driven in 19 runs. Quinnipiac senior designated hitter **Brien Magee (Stamford, CT/Trinity Catholic/Salisbury School)** is one of the most prolific run producers on the circuit with 34 RBI (third in NEC) to go along with four homers and a .284 average. The veteran hitter also raised his average to .325 in league games. Monmouth sophomore lefthander **Marc Matt-Aurele (Wayne, NJ/Wayne Valley)** has proven equally adept at both starting or coming on in relief for the Hawks. He leads the NEC with a 2.04 ERA and has limited opposing batters to a .216 average, good for second in the conference. Matt-Aurele, who is 3-1 on the year and has struck out 57 in 61.2 innings, finished 3-0 with a 1.82 ERA in league outings. Quinnipiac junior **Chris Wakefield (Ronkonkoma, NY/Connetquot)** is also unbeaten in NEC play with a 5-0 record and 3.10 ERA. He is 5-1 overall with four complete games and 49 strikeouts in 54.2 innings.

## 2005 NEC Baseball Award Winners

### Player of the Year

Bryan Sabatella	Quinnipiac	1B	6-4	220	Jr	Wading River, NY/Shoreham Wading River
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### Pitcher of the Year

Jay Monti	Sacred Heart	RHP	6-1	200	So	Marlboro, NY/Marlboro
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### Rookie of the Year

Josh Vittek	Mount St. Mary's	OF	6-3	200	Fr	Eldersburg, MD/Liberty
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### Coach of the Year

Nick Giaquinto	Sacred Heart
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## 2005 NEC Baseball First Team All-Conference

Name	School	Pos.	Ht	Wt	Yr	Hometown/High School
Bryan Sabatella	Quinnipiac	1B	6-4	220	Jr	Wading River, NY/Shoreham Wading River
Joe Malfettano	Wagner	2B	5-10	185	Jr	Toms River, NJ/Toms River North
Nate Olson	Long Island	3B	6-0	170	Jr	Poland, ME/Central Maine CC
Ryan Nemcek	Sacred Heart	SS	5-11	160	Fr	Endwell, NY/Maine-Endwell
Tim Binkoski	Quinnipiac	OF	6-1	175	So	North Haven, CT/North Haven
Tom Pezzello	Central Connecticut State	OF	5-10	195	Sr	Waterford, CT/Waterford
Fran Rotella	Monmouth	OF	5-9	175	Sr	Secaucus, NJ/St. Peter's Prep
Scott Appleton	Central Connecticut State	C	5-10	185	Jr	Bloomfield, NJ/Bloomfield
Troy Sogluizzo	Wagner	DH	6-1	190	Sr	Staten Island, NY/Curtis
Chris Aldrich	Sacred Heart	LHP	6-0	185	Jr	Medway, MA/Medway
Jay Monti	Sacred Heart	RHP	6-1	200	So	Marlboro, NY/Marlboro

## 2005 NEC Baseball Second Team All-Conference

Name	School	Pos.	Ht	Wt	Yr	Hometown/High School
Eric Smith	Mount St. Mary's	1B	6-0	205	Jr	Marlton, NJ/St. Joseph's Prep (PA)
Nick Massari	Monmouth	2B	5-8	165	Jr	Trenton, NJ/Hamilton West
Tom Curry	St. Francis (NY)	3B	6-0	200	Sr	Brooklyn, NY/Xaverian
Greg Colonna	St. Francis (NY)	SS	5-11	190	Sr	Staten Island, NY/Msgr. Farrell
Matt Mastrianni	Wagner	OF	6-3	170	So	Ringoes, NJ/Hunterdon Central
Nick Papa	Wagner	OF	6-0	180	Jr	Freehold, NJ/Freehold
Josh Vittek	Mount St. Mary's	OF	6-3	200	Fr	Eldersburg, MD/Liberty
Mike Hussa	Monmouth	C	5-10	200	Jr	Denville, NJ/Seton Hall Prep
Brien Magee	Quinnipiac	DH	6-2	205	Sr	Stamford, CT/Trinity Catholic/Salisbury School
Matt Marc-Aurele	Monmouth	LHP	5-10	165	So	Wayne, NJ/Wayne Valley
Chris Wakefield	Quinnipiac	RHP	6-1	175	Jr	Ronkonkoma, NY/Connetquot