

Northeast Conference

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For Immediate Release

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Monmouth's Nick Massari Named NEC Baseball Player of the Year
Mount St. Mary's Dustin Pease Chosen NEC Pitcher of the Year
Hawks Rick Niederhaus Tabbed NEC Rookie of the Year
CCSU's Charlie Hickey Selected NEC Coach of the Year

Somerset, NJ -- On the eve of the 2006 Northeast Conference Baseball Tournament, the league announced its year-end all-conference award winners in balloting conducted by head coaches. Monmouth senior shortstop **Nick Massari (Trenton, NJ/Hamilton West)** was the unanimous choice as NEC Player of the Year, while teammate **Rick Niederhaus (Whitehouse Station, NJ/Hunterdon Central)** was voted NEC Rookie of the Year. Mount St. Mary's junior **Dustin Pease (Baltimore, MD/Archbishop Spalding)** earned NEC Pitcher of the Year accolades. CCSU's **Charlie Hickey** was chosen by his peers as NEC Coach of the Year. Monmouth leads the way with six all-stars, while Central Connecticut State and Quinnipiac both had five players named to the all-conference squad.

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 Saturday, May 27th. First round tournament pairings on Thursday afternoon pit top-seeded Central Connecticut State against #4 seed Sacred Heart at 12:00 pm, followed #2 seed Quinnipiac taking on #3 seed Wagner at 3:30 pm.

Massari, a two-time all-NEC second teamer at second base the past two seasons, shifted to shortstop for his senior season and continued to produce for the Hawks as he became the third MU player to take home the league's top honor. He ranks among the NEC leaders in most offensive categories and leads the league in slugging percentage (.632), runs scored (48), hits (73), runs batted in (51), total bases (117) and total plate appearances (225). Massari, who earned *Akadema* NEC Player of the Week honors twice this year, stands second in the conference in batting average (.395), on-base percentage (.475), home runs (8), hit by pitch (10) and stolen bases (21).

The workhorse of NEC pitchers, Pease threw a league-high 92.0 innings, while easily topping the conference with 10 wins to become the first-ever Mount St. Mary's player honored as Pitcher of the Year. The southpaw closed out his junior season 10-4 with a 3.42 ERA, 73 strikeouts and a .244 opponent batting average. Along with leading the league in wins and inning pitched, he ranks among the conference leaders in ERA (sixth), opponent batting average (third), strikeouts (fifth), appearances (fifth - 21) and games started (fourth - 12). Pease stepped up his game even more in league play, going 6-2 with a 2.91 ERA, while striking out 41 batters and allowing just 35 hits, 17 earned runs and a mere six walks in 52.2 innings. He tossed five complete games and two shutouts, while holding NEC opponents to a .191 batting average.

Niederhaus came onto the NEC scene immediately, earning four *Akadema* NEC Rookie of the Week awards from his designated hitter position. In only his freshman campaign, he ranked fourth in the league with a .382 batting average, third in on-base percentage (.470), sixth in slugging percentage (.546) and tied for fifth in triples (3). He appeared in 42 games for Monmouth, starting 41 and in addition to his previously mentioned statistics, compiled 54 hits, 28 RBI, 19 runs, five doubles, four home runs and four stolen bases.

Hickey's selection by league head coaches as NEC Coach of the Year marks the third time the Blue Devils skipper has earned accolades from his peers, having taken home the honor in 2001 and 2003. After missing the NEC postseason last year, Hickey returned CCSU to their regular season championship status, claiming its third regular season crown in the last four years, and fourth overall under the direction of the seventh year head coach. Hickey guided the Blue Devils to a 16-7 conference mark and a 31-16 overall record thus far this season. Offensively, his squad leads the league with a .309 batting average, .397 on-base percentage, 310 runs scored and 276 runs batted in. His pitching staff is second in the NEC with a 4.58 ERA.

(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

Nine additional honorees join major award winners Massari (shortstop), Pease (pitcher) and Niederhaus (designated hitter) on the all-NEC first team. The first team features a near complete turnover from last season with Quinnipiac's **Tim Binkoski (North Haven, CT/North Haven)** the only repeat first team honoree, while four players made the jump from second team accolades.

Joining Pease on the first team pitching rotation is CCSU's junior right-handed pitcher **Evan Scribner (Washington Depot, CT/Shepaug Valley)**. He earned *Akadema* NEC Pitcher of the week honors on May 15th, and enters tournament play ranking third in the league with a 2.75 earned run average. In 11 starts, Scribner has posted a 7-4 record with eight complete games, two shutouts and 49 strikeouts.

Joining Massari and Niederhaus on the all-conference first team are Monmouth teammates **Mike Hussa (Denville, NJ/Seton Hall Prep)** and **Patrick Sullivan (Long Branch, NJ/CBA)**. Hussa, a senior catcher, was a second team honoree last year, while Sullivan, a senior outfielder, makes his first all-star appearance. Hussa batted .331 with 60 hits, 31 RBI, 34 runs, six doubles, four home runs and had a league-high 13 hit by pitches for the Hawks. Defensively, he posted a .976 fielding percentage along with 186 putouts and 14 assists. Sullivan topped the NEC with six triples this season and also established a new three-bag career-record at Monmouth. He closed out his collegiate career batting .328 with 63 hits (fifth in the NEC), 38 runs batted in (fourth) and 37 runs scored (seventh).

Holding down the first base spot on the first team is last year's NEC Rookie of the Year, Mount St. Mary's sophomore **Josh Vittek (Eldersburg, MD/Liberty)**. Vittek was a crucial component to the Mount's 12-11 conference season, topping the NEC in doubles with 20, while ranking second in slugging percentage (.593), third in runs batted in (39), home runs (7) and total bases (96) and ninth in batting average (.340) and hits (55).

Sacred Heart second baseman **Jason Maiella (N. Haledon, NJ/Manchester)** is the Pioneers lone first team representative after batting .309 with 56 hits, 32 RBI, 30 runs, 15 doubles, two triples, three home runs and five stolen bases, while notching a .923 fielding percentage from his second base slot. He is tied for second in the NEC with four sacrifice flies, is tied for fourth in doubles, and is tied for seventh in hits.

Quinnipiac sophomore third baseman **John Delaney (Hanson, MA/Xaverian Bros.)** and junior outfielders Binkoski and **Ryan Rizzo (East Northport, NY/Commack)** make up the Bobcats first team contingent that led QU to a second place showing and 14-8 league mark. Delaney ranks fifth in the league with a .356 batting average and has tallied 53 hits, 30 runs scored, 18 runs batted in, eight doubles and one triple this season. Binkoski makes his second straight all-conference first team appearance after batting .339 and posting a .423 on-base percentage, both of which rank among the top-ten in the NEC. He also stands among the league leaders in runs (35), hits (56) and home runs (5). Rizzo tops the league with a .398 batting average and ranks among the conference leaders in hits (70 - second), total bases (94 - fourth), on-base percentage (.462 - fourth), runs scored (41 - tied for fourth) and slugging percentage (.534 - seventh).

Fairleigh Dickinson junior **Matt Born (Saskatoon, Canda/Bedford Royal Collegiate)** rounds out the first team honorees and is the Knights' lone selection and NEC's inaugural utility player award recipient. Born spread his time between catcher, second base, outfield and designated hitter, committing only three errors in 48 games for a .986 fielding percentage. He batted .269 with 43 hits, 22 runs, 17 RBI and had team-highs in walks (14) and doubles (10).

The all-NEC second team includes only one repeat all-star as senior outfielder **Nick Papa (Freehold, NJ/Freehold)** is making his third straight second team appearance. Papa is batting .272 with 44 hits, 26 runs, 18 RBI and has stolen 16 bases on 21 attempts to rank sixth in the NEC in stolen bases. Joining Papa is Seahawks freshman utility player **Chris Drechsel (Cranford, NJ/Cranford)**, who batted .305 with 15 runs scored and 10 RBI, while also posting a .967 fielding percentage in 34 games for the Green & White between catcher and outfield. Monmouth placed two pitchers on the all-conference second team, sophomore righty **Brad Brach (Freehold, NJ/Freehold)** and senior lefty **Joe Cummings (Toms River, NJ/Toms River East)**. Brach leads the NEC in ERA (2.44) and games started (13), ranks second in opposing batting average (.220) and batters struck out (82) and third in innings pitched (84.2). He holds a 6-4 overall record, and a 5-3 ledger and 1.83 ERA in league action. Cummings tops the league in runners picked off with 11 and ranks among the conference leaders in ERA (3.08 - fourth), opponent batting average (.255 - sixth), innings pitched (90.2 - second) and strikeouts (59 - seventh). He holds a 6-3 record for the Hawks and was just dominant in NEC play, posting a 5-0 record with three shutouts and a 1.80 ERA. Mount St. Mary's junior **Stephan Fay (Arlington, VA/Bishop Denis J. O'Connell)** holds down the catcher position on the second team after knocking off 13 would be base stealers and batting .314 with 31 RBI, 25 runs and 16 doubles, tying for second in the NEC in two-baggers. First baseman **Jeff Hanson (Woodstock, NY/Onteora)** of Sacred Heart ranks seventh in the NEC in batting average (.342), fourth in slugging percentage (.562), fifth in on-base percentage (.443), ninth in runs batted in (36), fourth in doubles (15) and fifth in home runs (5). Quinnipiac junior

second baseman **Randy Gress (Shelton, CT/Fairfield)** and senior outfielder **Ricky Coppola (Orange, CT/Amityville Regional/Loomes Chaffee)** round out the Bobcats all-star honorees. Gress tops the NEC with 11 homers, is second in total bases (101), third in slugging percentage (.574), fifth in runs batted in (38) and is hitting .301 on the season. Coppola is batting .290 with 32 runs, 16 RBI, 12 doubles and has swiped 5-of-6 stolen base attempts. Central Connecticut State rounds out the all-conference second team with four players earning accolades. Junior third baseman **Matt Memoli (Shelton, CT/Shelton)**, junior shortstop **Sean Salvatore (Southington, CT/Southington)**, junior designated hitter **John Romano (Staten Island, NY/Brookdale CC)** and freshman outfielder **Richie Tri (Everett, WA/Barnstable (MA))** encompass the Blue Devils contingent. Memoli ranks second in the league in triples (5) and sixth in runs batted in (37), while hitting .319. Salvatore tops the league in on-base percentage (.477) and stands among the NEC leaders in batting average (.390 - third), slugging percentage (.549 - fifth), runs scored (41 - fourth), hits (64 - fourth), doubles (14 - seventh), total bases (90 - fifth) and walks (23 - fifth). Romano is batting .340 to rank eighth in the NEC in batting average and has 36 RBI to stand ninth in runs batted in. He has also tallied 53 hits, 26 runs, nine doubles, three home runs and a .445 slugging percentage and .416 on-base percentage. Tri, a three-time *Akadema* NEC Rookie of the Week honoree, made an immediate impact for the Blue Devils batting .307 with 50 hits, 35 runs (eighth in the NEC), 34 RBI, nine doubles, three triples (fifth), four home runs, 22 walks (seventh) and four sacrifice flies (second).

2006 NEC Baseball Award Winners

Player of the Year

Nick Massari Monmouth SS 5-8 175 Sr Trenton, NJ/Hamilton West

Pitcher of the Year

Dustin Pease Mount St. Mary's LHP 5-11 165 Jr Baltimore, MD/Archbishop Spalding

Rookie of the Year

Rick Niederhaus Monmouth DH 6-3 195 Fr Whitehouse Station, NJ/Hunterdon Central

Coach of the Year

Charlie Hickey Central Connecticut State

2006 NEC Baseball First Team All-Conference

Name	School	Pos.	Ht	Wt	Yr	Hometown/High School
Evan Scribner	Central Connecticut State	RHP	6-2	180	Jr	Washington Depot, CT/Shepaug Valley
Dustin Pease	Mount St. Mary's	LHP	5-11	165	Jr	Baltimore, MD/Archbishop Spalding
Mike Hussa	Monmouth	C	5-10	200	Sr	Denville, NJ/Seton Hall Prep
Josh Vittek	Mount St. Mary's	1B	6-3	200	So	Eldersburg, MD/Liberty
Jason Maiella	Sacred Heart	2B	5-7	165	Jr	N.Haledon, NJ/Manchester
John Delaney	Quinnipiac	3B	5-10	180	So	Hanson, MA/Xaverian Bros.
Nick Massari	Monmouth	SS	5-8	175	Sr	Trenton, NJ/Hamilton West
Tim Binkoski	Quinnipiac	OF	6-1	175	Jr	North Haven, CT/North Haven
Ryan Rizzo	Quinnipiac	OF	5-10	180	Jr	East Northport, NY/Commack
Patrick Sullivan	Monmouth	OF	5-11	195	Sr	Long Branch, NJ/CBA
Rick Niederhaus	Monmouth	DH	6-3	195	Fr	Whitehouse Station, NJ/Hunterdon Central
Matt Born	Fairleigh Dickinson	UT	5-7	165	Jr	Saskatoon, Canada/Bedford Road Collegiate

2006 NEC Baseball Second Team All-Conference

Name	School	Pos.	Ht	Wt	Yr	Hometown/High School
Brad Brach	Monmouth	RHP	6-3	200	So	Freehold, NJ/Freehold Township
Joe Cummings	Monmouth	LHP	5-10	175	Sr	Toms River, NJ/Toms River East
Stephan Fay	Mount St. Mary's	C	5-11	190	Jr	Arlington, VA/Bishop Denis J. O'Connell
Jeff Hanson	Sacred Heart	1B	6-5	220	So	Woodstock, NY/Onteora
Randy Gress	Quinnipiac	2B	6-1	175	Jr	Shelton, CT/Fairfield
Matt Memoli	Central Connecticut State	3B	5-11	190	Jr	Shelton, CT/Shelton
Sean Salvatore	Central Connecticut State	SS	5-10	200	Jr	Southington, CT/Southington
Nick Papa	Wagner	OF	6-0	180	Sr	Freehold, NJ/Freehold
Ricky Coppola	Quinnipiac	OF	5-11	180	Sr	Orange, CT/Amityville Regional/Loomes Chaffee
Richie Tri	Central Connecticut State	OF	6-1	190	Fr	Everett, WA/Barnstable (MA)
John Romano	Central Connecticut State	DH	6-0	215	Jr	Staten Island, NY/Brookdale CC
Chris Drechsel	Wagner	UT	5-11	190	Fr	Cranford, NJ/Cranford