

Northeast Conference

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For Immediate Release
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Mount St. Mary's Captures First Ever NEC Baseball Title

Atlantic City, NJ -- Mount St. Mary's notched a pair of wins over tournament favorite Monmouth en route to its first ever Northeast Conference championship. The Mountaineers began the day with an 8-3 win over the Hawks, thanks in part to Ryan Murray, who finished 3-for-3 with two runs scored. Tournament MVP Josh Vittek led the way in the final game of the tournament going 4-for-4 with six RBIs and four runs scored, propelling the Mount to a 14-2 win. The Mount will represent the Northeast Conference in the NCAA Tournament against an opponent that will be announced on the NCAA Baseball Selection Show on Monday, May 26.

Game Six: #4 Mount St. Mary's 8, #1 Monmouth 3

Mount St. Mary's scored five times in the bottom of the eighth inning to defeat Monmouth, 8-3, in the championship round of the Northeast Conference Tournament, forcing a deciding winner take all game that will begin at 3:00 p.m.

The Mount (20-32) has won three straight games out of the loser's bracket in the double elimination tournament held at Bernie Robbins Stadium to force championship game.

Ryan Terry (Levittown, PA/Conwell Egan Catholic) opened the scoring with a solo home run to right field in the top of the first inning. The Hawks found the power again when freshman **Nick Pulsonetti (Old Tappan, NJ/Northern Valley Regional-Old Tappan)** led off the bottom of the second with a solo shot off the scoreboard.

The Mount loaded the bases in the bottom of the second when **Ryan Murray (Enola, PA/East Pennsboro)** was hit by a pitch, **Kyle Kane Boonsboro, MD/Boonsboro)** walked and **Zach Helman (Waynesboro, PA/Waynesboro)** blooped a single to center field. **Alex Andrews (Vienna, VA/James Madison)** lofted a sacrifice fly to plate Murray for the Mount's first run of the game, cutting the Monmouth lead to 2-1.

The Mount (20-32) evened the score in the bottom of the third. **Shane Eyler (Taneytown, MD/Francis Scott Key)** opened the frame with a base hit and moved to third on Josh Vittek's single through the right side. Murray plated Eyler with the game-tying run on a single through the left side to tie the score at 2-2.

2008 NEC Baseball Championship Atlantic City, NJ Bernie Robbins Stadium May 22-24, 2008

Thursday, May 22

Game One: No. 1 Monmouth 12, No. 4 Mt. St. Mary's 7

Game Two: No. 2 CCSU 8, No. 3 Wagner 4

Friday, May 23

Game Three: No. 1 Monmouth 10, No. 2 CCSU 9

Game Four: No. 4 Mount St. Mary's 5, No. 3 Wagner 1

Game Five: No. 4 Mount St. Mary's 5, No. 2 CCSU 8

Saturday, May 24

Game Six: No. 4 Mount St. Mary's 8, No. 1 Monmouth 3

Game Seven: No. 4 Mount St. Mary's 14, No. 1 Monmouth 2

(2008 NEC Baseball Final Day Recaps • Page 1-of-3)

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

Monmouth strung together back-to-back singles by **Chris Collazo (Wall, NJ/Wall)** and **Shawn Teters (Springdale, AR/Arkansas-Fort Smith)** with one out in the top of the fourth. However, Mount reliever **Mike Matta (Woodbridge, VA/Potomac)** got out of the jam with a nice 1-6-3 double play.

Drew Counselman (Sykesville, MD/Century) gave the Mount a 3-2 advantage when he belted a solo home run to left-center field with one out in the bottom of the fifth. It was Counselman's sixth home run of the season and second of the NEC Tournament.

In the top of the sixth inning, **Paul Bottigliero (Milford, CT/Garden City CC)** led off with a walk and moved to second on a base hit by Collazo, but Matta was again able to thwart the rally with a ground out and a strikeout to end the inning.

The Hawks broke through to even the score with a run in the top of the seventh. **Kyle Higgins (Green Brook, NJ/Watchung Hills)** doubled and moved to third on a single by Terry. **Andy Meyers (Stratford, NJ/Sterling)** then singled to right field to score Higgins with the tying run. Matta got out of the inning with another 1-6-3 double play to keep the score tied.

In the top of the eighth, Teters and **Brett Holland (Pittsburgh, PA/Baldwin)** recorded consecutive singles with two outs for the Hawks. Matta struck out pinch hitter **Tim McEndy (Malvern, PA/Cincinnati)** to end the threat.

A four-run bottom of the eighth sealed the victory for the Mount. Vittek struck out to open the bottom of the eighth, but he reached first when Monmouth catcher had a passed ball on the third strike. Murray, the next batter, singled on a bunt to put two runners on with no outs. After the Hawks got the first out on a fielder's choice, the runners moved up on a **Brett Brach (Freehold, NJ/Freehold Township)** wild pitch.

Brach struck out the next batter, but Andrews drew a bases loaded walk to force home the go-ahead run to give the Mount a 4-3 advantage. Eiden then doubled down the right field line driving home a pair of runs. Monmouth right fielder Bottigliero's throw on the play got away and went into the dugout, allowing a third run to score and Eiden to move up to third base for an 8-3 Mount lead. Eiden scored on a Monmouth error to give the Mount a five-run advantage.

Murray was 3-for-3 with a pair of runs scored for the Mount while Counselman added a pair of hits in the victory. Matta allowed one run while striking out six in 6.1 innings of relief to earn the victory and improve to 5-4 on the season.

Higgins had three hits, including two doubles, for the Hawks while Terry, Collazo and Teters each added a pair of hits in the game.

Game Seven : #4 Mount St. Mary's 14, #1 Monmouth 2

NEC Tournament MVP **Josh Vittek (Eldersburg, MD/Liberty)** went 4-for-4 with a home run and a NEC Tournament record six RBI to pace Mount St. Mary's to a 14-2 win over Monmouth in the NEC Championship game on Saturday afternoon. With the win, the Mount advances to the NCAA Tournament for the first time in school history.

Vittek was 4-for-4 with six RBI and four runs scored to pace the Mount to the win. **Zach Helman (Waynesboro, PA/Waynesboro)** added a 3-for-5 day with his first collegiate home run and a career-high five RBI in the win for the Mount as well. **Ryan Murray (Enola, PA/East Pennsboro)** went 3-for-5 with a home run and three RBI while **Matt Eiden (Silver Spring, MD/St. John's)** chipped in three hits in the victory.

Mount starter **Craig Henson (Hagerstown, MD/Boonsboro)**, who improved to 1-6 this season with the victory, walked a pair in the top of the first inning, but retired **Nick Pulsonetti (Old Tappan, NJ/Northern Valley Regional-Old Tappan)** looking on a third strike to escape the inning without damage.

The Mount (21-32) came out swinging in the bottom of the first with back-to-back base hits from Eiden and **Shane Eyler (Taneytown, MD/Francis Scott Key)**. Mount cleanup hitter Vittek then drove the ball off the wall in left center field for a two-run double to give the Mount an early 2-0 advantage. Right fielder Murray laced a single to center field to plate Vittek for a three-run advantage.

Mount St. Mary's added to the lead with a pair of runs in the bottom of the third. **Drew Counselman (Sykesville, MD/Liberty)** reached on an error, Vittek singled to left, and **Kyle Kane (Boonsboro, MD/Boonsboro)** had an infield hit to third to load the bases for the

Mountaineers. Freshman third baseman Helman followed with a two-run single to center field to push the Mount's margin to 5-0.

The Hawks got on the scoreboard in the top of the fourth inning. **Andy Meyers (Stratford, NJ/Sterling)** beat out a ground ball to first base for an infield hit to start the inning. With two outs, **Chris Collazo (Wall, NJ/Wall)** singled on a hard hit ball that got past Mount shortstop Counselman. **Shawn Teters (Springdale, AR/Arkansas-Fort Smith)** followed by lacing a ball down the left field line for an RBI double to cut the Mount lead to 5-1. Henson, however, got **Brett Holland (Pittsburgh, PA/Baldwin)** to ground out to short to end the inning.

Monmouth (37-16) cut into the lead again in the fifth when **Ryan Terry (Levittown, PA/Conwell Egan Catholic)** laced a line drive up the middle that Henson deflected into left field. Terry hustled out a double on the play. Meyers roped a line drive up the middle to score Terry to make the score 5-2.

Vitek continued his torrid hitting at the plate, lacing an RBI single in the bottom of the fifth to score Counselman, who singled to open the frame and moved to second on a wild pitch. After Vitek moved to second on a wild pitch, Murray roped a two-base hit off the left field fence to give the Mount a 7-2 advantage. Helman then blooped a single to right field to extend the Mount's lead to six.

The Mount sealed the victory with a show of power in the bottom of the sixth inning. Vitek belted a three-run homer to left while Murray followed with a solo shot for a 12-2 Mount lead. It was the second time this tournament and fourth time this season that Vitek and Murray have connected for back-to-back home runs. Helman followed with a two-run shot to left field, the third home run of the inning by the Mountaineers, to make the score 14-2.

Vitek now has 19 home runs on the season and 43 for his Mount career. His four home runs in the NEC Tournament tied a tournament record while his 19 home runs break the NEC's single-season mark set by Lou Denman of Long Island in 1995. Vitek's six RBI in the game set a NEC Tournament single-game record while his 12 RBI are an NEC Tournament record.

Henson, who entered the game 0-6 with a 7.85 ERA, allowed two runs in six innings to earn the victory for the Mount. It was his first win for the Mountaineers since posting the victory in a 3-1 decision over Bowling Green on March 7, 2006. **Max Brittenham (Stamford, CT/St. Luke's)** pitched the final three innings, to earn his second save of the season.

Terry, Meyers and Teters each had three hits in the game for the Hawks.

Vitek was named the NEC Tournament Most Valuable Player after hitting .458 with eight runs scored, five home runs and 12 RBI in the tournament. The Mount's Eiden, Murray and Mike Matta also earned spots on the All-Tournament team. Monmouth's **Kyle Higgins (Green Brook, NJ/Watchung Hills)**, Collazo, Pulsonetti and Meyers, along with Central Connecticut State's **Kyle Zarotney (Berlin, CT/Berlin)** round out the All-Tournament squad.

Game Notes...The Mount becomes the second team in NEC history to win the tournament coming out of the loser's bracket, joining Central Connecticut State, who achieved the feat in 2004...The Mount has won four straight games, the first time this season the team has won four in a row...The Mount offense produced an NEC Tournament record 71 hits and 10 home runs in the Mount's five games...The Mount had double figures in hits in each of the Mount's five games of the NEC Tournament...After opening the season 0-15, the Mount is 21-17 over its past 38 games.

NEC All-Tournament Team

Josh Vitek, Mount St. Mary's

Matt Eiden, Mount St. Mary's

Ryan Murray, Mount St. Mary's

Mike Matta, Mount St. Mary's

Kyle Higgins, Monmouth

Chris Collazo, Monmouth

Nick Pulsonetti, Monmouth

Andy Meyers, Monmouth

Kyle Zarotney, Central Connecticut State