

Northeast Conference

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For Immediate Release
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Northeast Conference Announces 2005 Valley National Bank Spring Scholar-Athlete Award Winners

Somerset, NJ -- Two student-athletes from Central Connecticut State, Mount St. Mary's and St. Francis (PA), along with one each from Long Island, Quinnipiac and Wagner comprise the 2005 Valley National Bank Spring Scholar-Athlete award winners. In addition to the Scholar-Athletes, the NEC also announced its spring academic honor roll, consisting of 371 student-athletes. All Scholar-Athlete award winners must have earned a minimum of 60 semester hours, maintained a minimum cumulative grade point average of 3.20 and participated with distinction as a member of a varsity team.

Central Connecticut State senior outfielder **Tom Pezzello (Waterford, CT/Waterford)** earns Valley National Bank Scholar-Athlete accolades in baseball. Pezzello was named to the all-NEC first team this past season after leading the Blue Devils with a .351 average, 54 hits, 33 runs scored, 25 walks, 10 stolen bases and a .443 on-base percentage. He ranked in the NEC top-10 in a host of categories, including on-base percentage (fourth), walks (fourth), batting average (fifth), hits (tenth) and steals (tenth). Pezzello also batted .407 in NEC-play, the third-best mark on the circuit. In his three years on the team, he hit .315 and accumulated 154 hits, six homers and 104 RBI. Pezzello majors in Management and posted a 3.51 grade point average.

Quinnipiac junior **Craig Cyr (Pembroke, NH/Pembroke Academy)** is the recipient of Valley National Bank Scholar-Athlete honors in men's golf. Cyr was named the 2005 NEC Men's Golfer of the Year following a fourth place finish (73-78-151) at the league championships in May. He placed fifth at the New England Championships in April and was later tabbed to the New England Golf Association first team. Cyr also captured the Hofstra Fall Invitational and Toski Invitational last October and finished 2004-05 with five top-10 finishes. A Business major, Cyr maintains a 3.46 grade point average.

Wagner junior **Alysse Sweeney (Wayne, NJ/Wayne Hills)** claims the Valley National Bank Scholar-Athlete award for women's golf. Sweeney fired a 152 (77-75) - the second lowest score in tournament history - to earn runner-up honors at the NEC Championships in April. With four top-five finishes to her credit, including third at the Kutztown Invitational and fifth at the Lehigh and Hofstra Invitationals, she finished with an average of 82.4 strokes per round in 2004-05. Sweeney, who was the 2004 NEC individual champion, is a two-time all-conference honoree and has twice been named to the league's Academic Honor Roll. Sweeney is an Arts Administration major who carries a 3.63 grade point average.

Mount St. Mary's graduate student **Naomi Campano Radio (Schnecksville, PA/Allentown Central Catholic)** captures Valley National Bank Scholar-Athlete honors in women's lacrosse for the second year in a row. Campano Radio, who was named first team all-conference for the second straight year and is a three-time all-league pick, helped lead the Mount to its second straight NEC title in early May. She led the conference in save percentage (.570) and goals-against-average (7.65), while ranking third and seventh, respectively, on a national level in the two categories. For her career, Campano Radio finished as the program's all-time leader in saves (770), minutes played (4,323) and wins (41). Her 770 stops also ranks 18th in NCAA Division I history. Campano Radio, a 2004-05 CoSIDA Academic All-American, has built an impressive list of credentials during her years at the Mount, including 2004 NEC Player of the Year, 2004-05 NEC Student-Athlete of the Year and 2004 NEC Tournament Most Valuable Player. She was recently named *ESPN The Magazine* Academic All-District and is a strong candidate for her second consecutive Academic All-America honor. After posting a 3.98 grade point average as an undergraduate, Campano Radio finished her first year of graduate school with a perfect 4.0 as she pursues a Master's Degree in Education.

(2005 NEC Spring Scholar-Athlete Release; 1-of-2)

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

Central Connecticut State junior outfielder **Kristin Kropp (Franklin, CT/Norwich Free Academy)** is the winner of the Valley National Bank Scholar-Athlete award for softball. A two-time all-NEC honoree who led CCSU to a school record 11 conference victories in 2005, Kropp was named a second team league all-star after leading the Blue Devils with a .355 average, 28 runs, 49 hits, eight doubles, 14 stolen bases, a .449 slugging percentage and .411 on-base percentage. She finished sixth in the conference in steals and ninth in hitting. Kropp was one of three CCSU players who subsequently earned New England Intercollegiate Softball Coaches Association accolades, and the lone Blue Devil named to the first team. Earlier this spring, she was named an *ESPN The Magazine* Academic All-District performer (second team). A member of the CCSU Honor's Program, Kropp is a Communications major who sports a 3.77 grade point average.

Mount St. Mary's junior **Jeff Lamberton (Glen Burnie, MD/Mount St. Joseph's)** takes home Valley National Bank Scholar-Athlete honors in men's tennis. A first team all-NEC pick at the #4 flight in 2004-05, Lamberton's strong play helped lead the Mount to second place at the NEC Championships in April, the program's highest finish since the tournament was switched to a team-flighted event in 1999. He won a pair of straight set matches at the event, and finished the year with a 13-7 overall record, including 11-3 against #4 flight competition. Lamberton also went undefeated in conference dual matches, posting an 8-0 mark. Lamberton majors in Accounting and maintains a 3.61 grade point average.

Long Island senior **Veronica Apostu-Efremov (Bucharest, Romania/Mihai Viteaful College)** is the women's tennis Valley National Bank Scholar-Athlete award winner. Apostu-Efremov, who was recently named Long Island's Female Scholar-Athlete of the Year, was one of the driving forces on a team that took second at the NEC Championships for the second straight year. She was selected second team all-NEC at #1 doubles along with partner Krystina Bachner, as the duo combined for an NEC-high 16 wins against just five setbacks. The tandem also sported a 7-1 mark in league outings. In singles, Apostu-Efremov posted a 14-7 record at #2 singles and was 5-1 against conference competition. A Media Arts major, Apostu-Efremov sports a near-perfect 3.96 grade point average.

St. Francis (PA) junior **Ryan Sheehan (Pittsburgh, PA/Baldwin)** earns the fourth Valley National Bank Scholar-Athlete accolade of his career and second straight in men's outdoor track and field following an outstanding 2005 campaign. Sheehan became the first-two time All-American in St. Francis (PA) history in early June when he finished 11th at the NCAA Championships in the 10,000 meters in a time of 29:13.81. A year earlier, he placed sixth at nationals in the same event. Sheehan also earned Most Valuable Performer honors at the 2005 NEC Championships after winning both the 5,000 (14:45.37) and 10,000 meter (32:02.43) races. The Pittsburgh, PA native is now a 15-time NEC individual champion in cross country and track and field. Sheehan, who has already earned *ESPN The Magazine* Academic All-District recognition, is now a candidate for national Academic All-America honors. He is a finalist for a 2005 NCAA Postgraduate Scholarship and was the recipient of the St. Francis (PA) Turano Award, which goes to the school's top senior male student-athlete. Sheehan majors in Biology and carries a 3.44 grade point average.

St. Francis (PA) sophomore **Erika Jacobs (Toronto, Ontario/West Hill Collegiate)** is the recipient of Valley National Bank Scholar-Athlete honors in women's outdoor track and field. Jacobs, who also claimed the 2004-05 Valley Scholar-Athlete award in women's indoor track and field, raced to the 800 meter title (2:11.73) at the 2005 NEC Championships to help lead the Red Flash to their second league crown in the last three years. She also placed third in the 1,500 meters at the conference meet in May. A two-time all-NEC cross country performer, Jacobs holds three individual school track records (800 and 1,000 meters indoors, and 800 meters outdoors). She is also an *ESPN The Magazine* Academic All-District award winner who is on the national ballot for Academic All-America honors. Additionally, she is a 2004-05 Arthur Ashe Jr. Sports Scholar and was selected as the Red Flash women's track and field team's 2005 National Student-Athlete Day honoree. Jacobs is currently pursuing a double major of Psychology and Pre-Law. Her grade point average currently stands at 3.98.

2005 Valley National Bank Spring Scholar-Athletes

Sport	Name	School	GPA	Major
Baseball	Tom Pezzello	Central Connecticut State	3.51	Management
Men's Golf	Craig Cyr	Quinnipiac	3.46	Business
Women's Golf	Alysse Sweeney	Wagner	3.63	Arts Administration
Women's Lacrosse	Naomi Campano Radio	Mount St. Mary's	4.00	Education
Softball	Kristin Kropp	Central Connecticut State	3.77	Communications
Men's Tennis	Jeff Lamberton	Mount St. Mary's	3.61	Accounting
Women's Tennis	Veronica Apostu-Efremov	Long Island	3.96	Media Arts
Men's Outdoor Track & Field	Ryan Sheehan	St. Francis (PA)	3.44	Biology
Women's Outdoor Track & Field	Erika Jacobs	St. Francis (PA)	3.98	Psychology/Pre-Law