

# **Northeast Conference**

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**For Immediate Release**  
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## **Bryant University Accepts Invitation To Join Northeast Conference**

**Somerset, NJ** - Bryant University has accepted an invitation from the Northeast Conference's Council of Presidents to become the NEC's 12th member, it was announced today by league Commissioner Brenda Weare. Bryant will become a core member of the conference in 2012 upon completion of the five-year NCAA Division I reclassification period.

"Bryant is an outstanding university that has demonstrated excellence both academically and competitively," said Weare. "They are an excellent fit for the NEC, and we look forward to them joining us in the fall of 2012."

Located in Smithfield, Rhode Island, Bryant currently competes at the NCAA Division II level. The institution began its transition into Division I when it filed for reclassification this past May.

"On behalf of the faculty, staff, student body, student-athletes, and coaches, Bryant University is very proud and honored to accept an invitation to join the Northeast Conference," said Ronald K. Machtley, Bryant University President.

Bryant's Director of Athletics Bill Smith also expressed his excitement.

"Membership in the prestigious Northeast Conference will raise our academic and athletic profiles, providing our student-athletes the opportunity to compete at the highest level," said Smith.

Nicknamed the Bulldogs, Bryant is a charter member of the Northeast-10 Conference, which was formed in 1980. The school fields a nationally competitive athletics program that finished 27th in the Division II Director's Cup standings in 2006-07 and captured its third Northeast-10 Presidents' Cup trophy - awarded annually to the top athletics program among the 15 member institutions that make up the conference - in the last four years.

"The movement to Division I athletic competition is consistent with our strategic plan to continually enhance Bryant University's reputation as a superb educational institution," said Machtley.

Bryant offers a broad-based athletic program, fielding 11 men's and 11 women's sports teams. Sports offered include baseball, men's and women's basketball, men's and women's cross country, football, men's golf, men's and women's lacrosse, men's and women's soccer, softball, men's and women's swimming, men's and women's tennis, men's and women's indoor and outdoor track and field, and women's volleyball. The NEC currently sponsors each of the sports Bryant competes in at this time with the exception of men's lacrosse.

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Robert Morris University • Sacred Heart University • St. Francis (NY) College  
Saint Francis (PA) University • Wagner College

“I think this is great for the Northeast Conference,” said Vice Admiral Paul Gaffney, President of Monmouth University and Chair of the NEC Membership Committee. “We were extremely impressed with the commitment of their President, trustees, and athletic department staff. We can’t wait to play them.”

The NEC is expanding for the first time since 1996 when Central Connecticut State (1997), Quinnipiac (1998), UMBC (1998, departed in 2003) and Sacred Heart (1999) were added.

Now in its 27th season, the Northeast Conference is an NCAA Division I collegiate athletic association consisting of 11 institutions of higher learning located throughout five states. Media coverage of the NEC extends to four of the largest markets in the United States - New York (#1), Pittsburgh (#22), Baltimore (#24), and Hartford/New Haven (#29). Founded in 1981 as the basketball-only ECAC Metro Conference, the NEC has grown to sponsor 21 championship sports for men and women and now enjoys automatic or play-in access to 13 different NCAA Championships. NEC member institutions include Central Connecticut State, Fairleigh Dickinson, Long Island, Monmouth, Mount St. Mary's, Quinnipiac, Robert Morris, Sacred Heart, St. Francis (NY), Saint Francis (PA) and Wagner. For more information on the NEC, visit [www.northeastconference.org](http://www.northeastconference.org).

### **TRANSACTIONS:**

**NORTHEAST CONFERENCE:** Announced that Bryant University will join the conference effective 2012.

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