

Northeast Conference

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Quinnipiac's Graciano Brito Selected Northeast Conference Men's Soccer Player of the Year *Monmouth's Angelo Amato Chosen NEC Defensive Player of the Year* *Mount St. Mary's Chris Wheeler Tabbed NEC Rookie of the Year* *Mount St. Mary's Rob Ryerson NEC Coach of the Year Honor*

Somerset, NJ -- For the second year in a row, Quinnipiac senior forward **Graciano Brito (Sao Nicolau, Cape Verde/Liceu Ludgero Lima)** was awarded Northeast Conference (NEC) Men's Soccer Player of the Year honors in a vote by league head coaches. Monmouth senior defender **Angelo Amato (Livingston, NJ/Montclair Kimberly Academy)** earned NEC Defensive Player of the Year accolades, while Mount St. Mary's freshman forward **Chris Wheeler (Newcastle, Australia/St. Francis Xavier)** claimed NEC Rookie of the Year honors. Mount St. Mary's **Rob Ryerson** was tabbed NEC Coach of the Year by his peers.

On the eve of the NEC Men's Soccer Tournament, the awards were announced at a banquet held on the campus of tourney host Monmouth University in West Long Branch, NJ on Thursday evening. In Friday's semifinals at the Great Lawn, top-seeded Monmouth entertains #4 seed Mount St. Mary's at 11:00 am, followed by #2 seed Fairleigh Dickinson meeting #3 seed Quinnipiac at 1:30 pm. The championship match is slated for Sunday, November 16 at 12:00 pm. The winner of the NEC championship will claim the league's automatic berth to the NCAA Tournament. First round NCAA action begins on November 21-22 at campus sites.

Brito is the fifth player in conference history to walk away with back-to-back NEC Player of the Year honors, joining Monmouth's Joni Kallioinen (1990-91), St. Francis (NY)'s Duke Shamo (1997-98), UMBC's Giuliano Celenza (1999-00) and CCSU's Alex Harrison (2004-05). Following a 12-goal junior year, Brito was named to the Hermann Trophy Watch List prior to the start of the 2008 season, then proceeded to take his game to another level for the Bobcats. In leading Quinnipiac to a school Division I record ten victories and its first NEC Tournament berth since 2004, the native of Sao Nicolau, Cape Verde earned a conference-high four *Brine*/NEC Player of the Week awards. Similar to last season when he led the nation in goals and scoring for a significant stretch, Brito is currently in his third week ranked first in the nation in goals per game (1.0) and is the second-leading point producer (2.17 ppg) in the country. With two markers in last Sunday's playoff-clinching win over the Mount, Brito boosted his league-leading totals to 18 goals and 39 points, including an NEC-best nine goals and 21 points against conference opposition. Brito, who enters the playoffs with 40 goals and 92 points over the course of his spectacular career, is one of two Quinnipiac players to claim NEC Player of the Year honors, joining Everson Maciel (2001), whose single-season records for goals and points he eclipsed last week.

Amato becomes the second Monmouth player in the three-year history of the award - joining former teammate Hugh MacDonald - to earn NEC Defensive Player of the Year honors. A second team all-NEC pick last season, Amato was one of the ringleaders of a defense that allowed a league-low 11 goals and posted a conference-best nine shutouts en-route to the program's fourth consecutive NEC regular season title. In three regular season matches against the NEC Tournament field, the Hawks permitted just one marker and limited those opponents to a combined eight shots on goal. A program that has been built upon its commitment to defense, Monmouth currently ranks in the NCAA top-20 in goals-against-average, save percentage and shutout percentage. Amato, who hails from Livingston, NJ, also scored his first career goal this season, netting the game-winner on a penalty kick in a 1-0 win over Fairleigh Dickinson on November 2.

Wheeler is in the midst of a memorable debut season for Mount St. Mary's, a team stacked with young talent on the offensive side of the ball. By midseason, he had already developed into one of the most prolific scorers in the conference and led a Mount charge to its first playoff berth since 1999. Wheeler, who hails from Newcastle, Australia, currently leads all NEC freshman with ten goals and 23 points and ranks third and

(2008 NEC Men's Soccer All-Conference Team Release; Page 1-of-4)

Bryant University (2012-13) • 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

fourth, respectively, in the conference in the two key categories. Over a four-game stretch starting in late September, he scored six goals, including a hat trick in a 6-0 win over Robert Morris. The hat trick was one of only four recorded by NEC players this season and the first by a conference freshman in over a year. Wheeler is the third Mount St. Mary's player to be bestowed with NEC Rookie of the Year honors, joining Duncan Gladwin (1996) and Niall Lepper (1999).

Ryerson's masterful job with a youthful squad that featured seven underclassmen in his starting lineup amounted to a rebirth for the Mount St. Mary's program, which was picked to finish last in a preseason poll of NEC head coaches. Engineering a five-game improvement from 2007, the Mount ended the regular season with nine victories, the most for the program since 2000, and compiled five league wins, the most since the 2003 campaign. Sporting the NEC's top scoring offense, the eighth year head coach brings Mount St. Mary's into the postseason for the first time since 1999 in search of the program's first-ever NEC crown. Ryerson joins Mark Mettrick (1994, 1996) and Jim Deegan (1990) as NEC Coach of the Year award winners from the Mount.

Regular season champion Monmouth boasts a trio of first team all-NEC honorees. Along with Angelo Amato, the Hawks' backfield was bolstered by junior defender **Daniel Bostock (Nottinghamshire, England/Virginia Intermont)**, a second team all-star a year ago. With the duo patrolling the area in front of the net, Monmouth blanked six straight opponents early in the season to gain a foothold near the top of the NSCAA North Atlantic region rankings and began receiving votes in the NSCAA Top-25 national poll. The Hawks are currently the second-ranked team in the regional poll and the equivalent of 30th nationally. Bostock logged one assist on the year. After a promising rookie campaign, sophomore midfielder **Ryan Kinne (Naugatuck, CT/Naugatuck)** came into his own this season as an all-around offensive weapon for the Hawks. Kinne is currently second in the NEC with six assists, and ranks third on the circuit with 10 goals and 26 points.

Central Connecticut State sports a pair of veteran standouts who are no stranger to postseason accolades. Senior defender **David Tyrie (Norwich-Norfolk, England/City Of Norwich)** was the 2007 NEC Defensive Player of the Year and is a four-time conference all-star, including three successive first team picks. With Tyrie directing traffic in the backfield, the Blue Devils finished the year with six shutouts. One of the most feared players in the conference on set pieces, he contributed five goals to rank third on the club. Senior midfielder **Yan Klukowski (Wiltshire, England/Sheldon)** is another four year all-star for the Blue Devils, who was also recognized as a first team selection in 2005 and 2006. A former NEC Rookie of the Year, Klukowski finished as the CCSU leader with eight goals, five assists and 21 points. The crafty, creative midfielder ranks fifth in the NEC in assists and sixth in both goals and points. Both Tyrie and Klukowski were named to the Hermann Trophy Watch List prior to the start of the the season.

St. Francis (NY)'s one-two punch of sophomore forward **John Sallhag (Vaxjo, Sweden/Katedralskolan)** and senior midfielder **Semso Nikocecic (Brooklyn, NY/Kingsborough CC)** proved nearly unstoppable in a turnaround season for the Terriers. St. Francis lifted its win total by seven and with an 11-4-3 record enjoyed its best campaign since 1998, when the Terriers went 15-6-1. Sallhag, the 2007 NEC Rookie of the Year and a second team all-NEC choice as a freshman, ended his year ranked sixth in the NEC in goals (eight) and seventh in scoring (20 points). The 5'5" Nikocecic played a key role in directing a Terrier attack that scored 23 times during an eight-game mid-year win streak - the longest in the NEC since Fairleigh Dickinson won ten in a row in 2002 - and finished his senior season with a goal and two assists.

Fairleigh Dickinson junior forward **Samson Malijani (Lusaka, Zambia/Kafue)** continues to add to his already impressive resume with a second straight first team appearance after earning second team honors during his NEC Rookie of the Year season in 2006. A three-time *Brine*/NEC Player of the Week award winner, Malijani currently ranks second in the NEC with 14 goals and 32 points and is tied for the league lead with six game-winners. Likewise, he ranks seventh nationally in goals per game (0.82) and ninth in points per game (1.88). Malijani made national headlines earlier in the season when he scored a goal in ten straight matches - matching the ninth longest streak in NCAA Division I history - and was named *College Soccer News* National Player of the Week after recording a hat trick against Saint Francis (PA) on October 24th.

Mount St. Mary's senior midfielder **Vinnie Berry (Helensburgh, Scotland/St. Patrick's)** makes it three straight all-conference accolades, though this year marks his first team debut. Providing leadership and a veteran presence on a team laden with underclassmen, Berry scored once and tied a career-best with four assists.

Sacred Heart senior goalkeeper **Matthew Jones (Stoke-on-Trent, England/Sandon)** rounds out the all-NEC first team, the third such selection in his tenure on the Pioneers. Jones finished the season with a 1.08 goals against average and four shutouts. For his career, he played over 6,500 minutes in goal and posted 21 shutouts.

Quinnipiac and Sacred Heart had three players apiece recognized on the all-NEC second team for their performances this season.

While Graciano Brito grabbed the lion's share of the headlines for Quinnipiac, he received plenty of help from his teammates, who banded together to go unbeaten (4-0-2) and allow just three goals over the last six games of the regular season. The Bobcats will look to ride the hot hand of junior keeper **Frederick Hall (St. George, Bermuda/South Florida)**, who has gone 355:32 without allowing a goal to lower his season goals against average to 1.00. Hall, a repeat second team honoree, is tied for second in the NEC with seven shutouts and is the top ranked keeper in conference play with a 0.64 gaa. Hall and junior defender **Shane Recklet (Shelton, CT/Shelton)** are two of the reasons the Bobcats yielded a league-low six goals against league opponents. Recklet is a bonafide two-way threat who ranks third on the Bobcats with five goals (three game-winners) and 11 points. Junior **Fabricio Silva (Belo Horizonte, Brazil)** has been a vital cog in the midfield for Quinnipiac and has contributed with three assists on the year.

All three Sacred Heart second team honorees had reached all-star status at one point in their careers. Senior forward **Jason Tessitore (Orange, CT/Amity)** was an all-NEC first teamer as a freshman. He closed out a standout career by leading the Pioneers in scoring (five goals, two assists, 12 points) for the third time in his four years. Tessitore amassed 25 goals and tallied 57 points in his four years. The backfield tandem of **Anthony Anzevui (Newcastle, England/Monkseaton)** and **David Backman (Gothenburg, Sweden/Aspero Idrotts Gymnasium)** were part of a senior class that posted winning NEC records in three of the last four campaigns and finished their careers with 31 total victories, 22 of which came via shutout. A first team recipient last season, Backman wrapped his year with two goals and two assists. Anzevui was a first team all-star as a freshman in 2005.

An integral part of the youth movement at Monmouth, sophomore midfielder **Chase Barbieri (Hillsborough, NJ/Hillsborough)** scored perhaps the biggest goal of the year in the conference when he netted his league-leading sixth game-winner to give the Hawks a 2-1 double overtime win over CCSU and clinch the program's fourth consecutive NEC regular season title. Tied with classmate Ryan Kinne for third in the conference with ten markers, Barbieri also ranks fifth on the circuit with 22 points.

Fairleigh Dickinson midfielder **Paul King (Newcastle, England/Monkseaton)** and NEC Rookie of the Year Chris Wheeler of Mount St. Mary's were the only freshman to be voted all-conference by league head coaches. King turned some heads when he was named NSCAA National Player of the Week back in September and finished the season with an NEC-best four *Brine*/NEC Rookie of the Week awards. He heads into postseason play ranked second among NEC freshman with eight goals and 17 points on the year. Overall, he is sixth in goals and ninth in scoring.

Central Connecticut State sophomore midfielder **Robert Caverer (Tynemouth, England/Norham)** began his career in 2007 as a contributor on a Blue Devil team that won the NEC championship and advanced to the round of 16 in the NCAA Tournament. This season marks his elevation to league all-star after contributing a pair of game-winning goals and an assist on the year.

Long Island senior forward **Jukka Lehto (Lahti, Finland/Salpausselan Urheilulukio)** capped off a productive four-year career with his first all-conference honor. Lehto led the Blackbirds with four assists and 14 points, and ranked second with five goals. It marked his second straight year pacing LIU in point production.

2008 NEC Men's Soccer Award Winners

Player of the Year

Graciano Brito	Quinnipiac	F	6-2	Sr.	Sao Nicolau, Cape Verde/Liceu Ludgero Lima
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Defensive Player of the Year

Angelo Amato	Monmouth	D	6-0	Sr.	Livingston, NJ/Montclair Kimberly Academy
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Rookie of the Year

Chris Wheeler	Mount St. Mary's	F	6-0	Fr.	Newcastle, Australia/St. Francis Xavier
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Coach of the Year

Rob Ryerson	Mount St. Mary's
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2008 NEC Men's Soccer First Team All-Conference

Name	School	Pos.	Ht.	Yr	Hometown/High School
Graciano Brito	Quinnipiac	F	6-2	Sr.	Sao Nicolau, Cape Verde/Liceu Ludgero Lima
Samson Malijani	Fairleigh Dickinson	F	5-8	Jr.	Lusaka, Zambia/La Sapienza
John Sallhag	St. Francis (NY)	F	5-9	So.	Vaxjo, Sweden/Katedralskolan
Vinnie Berry	Mount St. Mary's	MF	5-9	Sr.	Helensburgh, Scotland/St. Patrick's
Ryan Kinne	Monmouth	MF	5-8	So.	Naugatuck, CT/Naugatuck
Yan Klukowski	Central Connecticut State	MF	6-1	Sr.	Wiltshire, England/Sheldon
Semso Nikocevic	St. Francis (NY)	MF	5-5	Sr.	Brooklyn, NY/Kingsborough CC
Daniel Bostock	Monmouth	D	6-3	Jr.	Nottinghamshire, England/Virginia Intermont
David Tyrie	Central Connecticut State	D	6-1	Sr.	Norwich-Norfolk, England/City Of Norwich
Angelo Amato	Monmouth	D	6-0	Sr.	Livingston, NJ/Montclair Kimberly Academy
Matthew Jones	Sacred Heart	GK	6-2	Sr.	Stoke-on-Trent, England/Sandon

2008 NEC Men's Soccer Second Team All-Conference

Name	School	Pos.	Ht.	Yr	Hometown/High School
Jukka Lehto	Long Island	F	5-10	Sr.	Lahti, Finland/Salpausselan Urheilulukio
Jason Tessitore	Sacred Heart	F	6-0	Sr.	Orange, CT/Amity
Chris Wheeler	Mount St. Mary's	F	6-0	Fr.	Newcastle, Australia/St. Francis Xavier
Chase Barbieri	Monmouth	MF	5-10	So.	Hillsborough, NJ/Hillsborough
Robert Cavener	Central Connecticut State	MF	6-0	So.	Tynemouth, England/Norham
Paul King	Fairleigh Dickinson	MF	5-11	Fr.	Newcastle, England/Monkseaton
Fabricio Silva	Quinnipiac	MF	5-10	Jr	Belo Horizonte, Brazil
Anthony Anzevui	Sacred Heart	D	6-2	Sr.	Newcastle, England/Monkseaton
David Backman	Sacred Heart	D	6-3	Sr.	Gothenburg, Sweden/Aspero Idrotts Gymnasium
Shane Recklet	Quinnipiac	D	6-0	Jr.	Shelton, CT/Shelton
Frederick Hall	Quinnipiac	GK	6-2	Jr.	St. George, Bermuda/South Florida