

# Northeast Conference

200 Cottontail Lane • Vantage Court North • Somerset, NJ 08873  
(732) 469-0440 • Fax (732) 469-0744 • [www.northeastconference.org](http://www.northeastconference.org)



For Immediate Release  
May 8, 2008

**Wagner's Andrea Lazzari Named NEC Player of the Year**  
**Long Island's Blaire Porter Tabbed NEC Pitcher of the Year**  
**Robert Morris' Jessica Calderone Chosen NEC Rookie of the Year**  
**Saint Francis' (PA) Sabrina Lane Picked NEC Coach of the Year**

Somerset, NJ - Wagner first baseman **Andrea Lazzari (Reno, NV/Wooster)** earned NEC Player of the Year honors, while Long Island's **Blaire Porter (Redmond, WA/Redmond)** received NEC Pitcher of the Year accolades. Robert Morris' **Jessica Calderone (Wilmington, DE/St. Marks)** garnered NEC Rookie of the Year honors, while Saint Francis' (PA) **Sabrina Lane** was chosen by her peers as the NEC Coach of the Year.

The awards were presented at a banquet on the eve of the 2008 NEC Softball Tournament, set to begin on Friday, May 9 at Long Island University in Brooklyn, NY. The four-team, double-elimination tournament will be contested over two days, with the championship game slated to begin on Saturday at 12:30 pm. First round tournament pairings on Friday pit #1 Long Island against #4 Wagner at 10:00 am followed by #2 Robert Morris facing #3 Saint Francis (PA) at 12:30 pm. The winner of the NEC Championship will receive the league's automatic berth in the NCAA Tournament. First round NCAA action begins on Friday, May 16 at campus sites.

Lazzari spearheads a potent Wagner offense that ranks eighth in the nation in batting average (.323), 16th in slugging percentage (.488) and 21st in scoring with over five runs per game. A product of Reno, NV, Lazzari currently ranks first in the NEC in home runs (10) and RBIs (54), second in hits (62) and slugging percentage (.721) and third in batting average (.422). The second baseman's .517 average in league play ranks second, while her .914 slugging percentage against conference opponents is tops in the NEC. Lazzari, the NEC's Rookie of the Year in 2006, ranks sixth nationally in RBIs per game (1.15).

Porter became the third straight Blackbird to earn NEC Pitcher of the Year honors, following in the footsteps of two-time NEC Pitcher of the Year Jenny Giles. The Redmond, WA native, who earned *Akadema*/NEC Rookie of the Week accolades on two occasions this season, enjoyed a stellar sophomore campaign, ranking first in the NEC in ERA (0.95), opponent batting average (.178), strikeouts (186) and wins (17). Porter, who threw three no-hitters on the season, was especially tough on conference opponents, recording a 0.72 ERA, while holding batters to a .159 average. She went the distance in all but one of her starts against league opponents, posting seven shutouts. Her 12 strikeouts in a 3-0 win against Robert Morris on April 6 tied an NEC game-high this season.

Calderone made her impact felt almost immediately finishing her inaugural regular season with a .404 batting average and a .435 on-base percentage. The Wilmington, DE native ranks first on the Colonials in hits with 59 and second in runs scored with 28, total bases (77) and slugging percentage (.527). The freshman was equally impressive during conference play boasting a .400 batting average, a .538 slugging percentage, 12 runs scored and seven RBIs.

Second year head coach Sabrina Lane guided the Red Flash to its first postseason berth since 2002. Saint Francis' (PA) 23 wins are the most since 2002 and rank third on the program's all-time single-season list. The Red Flash's 11-6 finish in conference play is its second-best league win percentage. With the return of 14 student-athletes from last season, Lane directed SFPA to an undefeated, 7-0 record in NEC home games this season, culminating in a crucial 4-2 win over NEC rival Monmouth that secured a playoff spot.

(2008 NEC Softball All-Conference Team Release; 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

Top seed Long Island headlines the list of programs with All-NEC honorees, placing seven student-athletes on the conference's first and second teams. Junior **Jenny Giles (Melbourne, FL/Eau Gallie)**, a two-time NEC Pitcher of the Year, joins Porter on the first team, along with senior first baseman **Vanessa Mejia (Roanoke, VA/Northside)**, freshman outfielder **Lauren Kemp (Scottsdale, AZ/Desert Mountain)** and designated player **Jessie DePippo (Westlake Village, CA/Agoura)**. Giles finished the regular season ranked third in the NEC in ERA (1.64). The 14-game winner flourished in league play, lowering her ERA to 0.90, while holding opponents to a paltry .181 batting average. Mejia hit .314 on the year, with 19 RBIs and 19 runs scored, while Kemp made an impression early, hitting .328 with 12 RBIs and 27 runs scored in her rookie campaign. DePippo hit her stride during conference play, hitting .442 in the Blackbirds' 18 league contests, with an .808 slugging percentage. The Westlake, CA native, who has five home runs, 15 doubles, 28 RBIs and 22 runs scored, stands one double shy of setting the school's all-time single-season mark.

Earning second team nods for the Blackbirds are shortstop **Celina Castillo (Redwood City, CA/Carlmont)** and second baseman **Brynn Lewis (Woodinville, WA/Woodinville)**. Castillo currently ranks eighth in the NEC in batting average with a .354 clip. The senior scored eight runs while knocking in 14 RBIs. Like their first team counterparts the duo blossomed during league play, with Castillo and Lewis boasting averages of .460 and .320, respectively. The pair combined for 21 RBIs and 21 runs against league opponents.

Wagner boasts the second most all-NEC student-athletes with a pair of first team honorees and a trio of second team selections. Senior shortstop **Katie Stevens (Reno, NV/Wooster)**, joins Lazzari on the first team after hitting .426 with a .625 slugging percentage and a .506 on base percentage. The Reno, NV native, who ranks ninth nationally in runs scored with 1.02 per game, ranks first in the NEC in runs with 48. Senior catcher **Victoria Batistelli (Huntington Beach, CA/Huntington Beach)** earns second team accolades after hitting .339 with a .608 slugging percentage against league opponents. Batistelli's 40 RBIs currently ranks second in the NEC. Rounding out the Seahawks' all-conference picks are senior outfielder **Ami Iwicki (Flemington, NJ/Hunterdon Central)** and designated player **Jaelyn Vanore (Palisades Park, NJ/Paramus Catholic)**. Iwicki hit .338 with 19 RBIs and 23 runs scored, while Vanore hit .330 with 22 RBIs and 24 runs.

Robert Morris, Saint Francis (PA) and Monmouth each placed three members on the league's all-conference squads. Colonials' outfielder **Brooke Panepinto (Belle Vernon, PA/Belle Vernon)** earns all-NEC first team honors after hitting .359 with a .627 slugging percentage. The junior's nine home runs this season are tied for second in the NEC. RMU third baseman **Susan Perich (Center, PA/Center)** garnered first team accolades after hitting .396 in league play with 15 RBIs and 13 runs scored. Colonials' first baseman **Annie Dubovec (Chagrin Falls, OH/Kenston)** rounds out the RMU's list of all-NEC selections, receiving second team honors after hitting .485 with 10 RBIs and seven runs during conference play.

Saint Francis (PA) utility player **Nicole Waligora (Johnstown, PA/Westmont Hilltop)** collected first team honors after finishing the regular season ranked fifth in the NEC in on-base percentage (.440). The Johnstown, PA native hit .326 on the year with 19 RBIs and 11 runs scored. Senior outfielder **Nicole Bender (Patton, PA/Cambria Heights)** and junior hurler **Laura Caldwell (Bellefonte, PA/Bellefonte)** round out the Red Flash's all-league awardees as all-NEC second team members. Bender hit .392 in league play and set a single-season program record in hits (62) and runs (42), while Caldwell, who tossed a pair of no-hitters on the year, including a perfect game in SFPA's 3-0 win over Sacred Heart on April 27, posted a 1.90 ERA in NEC play, holding opponents to a .216 average.

Monmouth sophomore catcher **Jessica Nicola (South Amboy, NJ/Sayreville War Memorial)** and junior outfielder **Nichole Alvarez (Brick, NJ/Brick Twp.)** earned all-NEC first team honors, while freshman **Emily deLong (Rothschild, WI/DC Everest)** garnered second team accolades. Nicola ranks fifth in the NEC in batting average (.389), while Alvarez led the league in batting average (.480), slugging percentage (.800), on-base percentage (.564) and stolen bases (29). The Brick, NJ native's .480 average ranks second nationally, while her 1.10 runs per game, 0.73 stolen bases per game and .564 on-base percentage ranks fourth, tenth and eighth, respectively. deLong, an *Akadema*/NEC Rookie of the Week honoree this season, made positive contributions throughout her rookie campaign finishing the season hitting .349 with 20 runs scored and a team-high 27 RBIs.

Rounding out this season's all-NEC selections are second teamers **Lindsay Glidden (Peachtree City, GA/Starr's Mill)** of Fairleigh Dickinson and **Megan Spehar (Thousand Oaks, CA/Thousand Oaks)** and **Jen Russell (Seymour, CT/St. Joseph's)** of Sacred Heart. Glidden led the Knights in batting average (.267) and slugging percentage (.362), while Spehar posted 11 RBIs and 20 runs scored along with nine wins and a 2.68 ERA as a utility player. Russell, a three-time NEC Pitcher of the Week this season, finished with a 7-2 record in conference play with a 1.56 ERA. The Seymour, CT native's 14 wins are tied for second in the NEC.

## 2008 NEC Softball Award Winners

### Player of the Year

Andrea Lazzari	Wagner	2B	Jr.	Reno, NV/Wooster
----------------	--------	----	-----	------------------

### Pitcher of the Year

Blaire Porter	Long Island	RHP	So.	Redmond, WA/Redmond
---------------	-------------	-----	-----	---------------------

### Rookie of the Year

Jessica Calderone	Robert Morris	SS	Fr.	Wilmington, DE/St. Marks
-------------------	---------------	----	-----	--------------------------

### Coach of the Year

Sabrina Lane	Saint Francis (PA)
--------------	--------------------

## 2008 NEC Softball First Team All-Conference

Name	School	Pos.	Yr	Hometown/High School
Jessica Nicola	Monmouth	C	So.	South Amboy, NJ/Sayreville War Memorial
Vanessa Mejia	Long Island	1B	Sr.	Roanoke, VA/Northside
Andrea Lazzari	Wagner	2B	Jr.	Reno, NV/Wooster
Susan Perich	Robert Morris	3B	Jr.	Center, PA/Center
Katie Stevens	Wagner	SS	Sr.	Reno, NV/Wooster
Nichole Alvarez	Monmouth	OF	Jr.	Brick, NJ/Brick Twp.
Lauren Kemp	Long Island	OF	Fr.	Scottsdale, AZ/Desert Mountain
Brooke Panepinto	Robert Morris	OF	Jr.	Belle Vernon, PA/Belle Vernon
Jessie DePippo	Long Island	DP	Sr.	Westlake Village, CA/Agoura
Nicole Waligora	Saint Francis (PA)	UT	Jr.	Johnstown, PA/Westmont Hilltop
Blaire Porter	Long Island	P	So.	Redmond, WA/Redmond
Jenny Giles	Long Island	P	Jr.	Melbourne, FL/Eau Gallie

## 2008 NEC Softball Second Team All-Conference

Name	School	Pos.	Yr	Hometown/High School
Victoria Batistelli	Wagner	C	Sr.	Huntington Beach, CA/Huntington Beach
Annie Dubovec	Robert Morris	1B	Fr.	Chagrin Falls, OH/Kenston
Brynn Lewis	Long Island	2B	So.	Woodinville, WA/Woodinville
Lindsay Glidden	Fairleigh Dickinson	3B	So.	Peachtree City, GA/Starr's Mill
Celina Castillo	Long Island	SS	Sr.	Redwood City, CA/Carlmont
Nicole Bender	Saint Francis (PA)	OF	Sr.	Patton, PA/Cambria Heights
Emily deLong	Monmouth	OF	Fr.	Rothschild, WI/DC Everest
Ami Iwicki	Wagner	OF	Sr.	Flemington, NJ/Hunterdon Central
Jaclyn Vanore	Wagner	DP	Jr.	Palisades Park, NJ/Paramus Catholic
Megan Spehar	Sacred Heart	UT	Sr.	Thousand Oaks, CA/Thousand Oaks
Laura Caldwell	Saint Francis (PA)	P	Jr.	Bellefonte, PA/Bellefonte
Jen Russell	Sacred Heart	P	Fr.	Seymour, CT/St. Joseph's