

Northeast Conference

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For Immediate Release

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Wagner's Andrea Lazzari Voted NEC Player of the Year
Long Island's Blaire Porter Tabbed NEC Pitcher of the Year
Quinnipiac's Heather Schwartzburg Chosen NEC Rookie of the Year
Sacred Heart's Pam London/Elizabeth Luckie Picked NEC Coach of the Year

Somerset, NJ - With the 2009 NEC Softball Tournament ready for the first pitch to be thrown, an array of student-athletes were honored at a banquet for their contributions on the diamond. For the second straight season, Wagner's **Andrea Lazzari (Reno, NV/Wooster)** was chosen as the NEC Player of the Year, just as Long Island's **Blaire Porter (Redmond, WA/Redmond)** repeated as the NEC Pitcher of the Year. Quinnipiac newcomer **Heather Schwartzburg (Mission Viejo, CA/Capistrano Valley)** capped off a successful freshman campaign with NEC Rookie of the Year distinction, while the NEC Coach of the Year award makes its way to Sacred Heart for the first time in league history honoring **Pam London**, who shares the recognition with co-head coach **Elizabeth Luckie**. The duo enters the postseason after 21 seasons at the helm of the Pioneer program and with a squad that is in the midst of a nine-game winning streak, marking the longest stretch in SHU's Division I history. On Mar. 28, London and Luckie reached a career milestone as they recorded their 400th victory.

Also earning a spot on the league's all-conference first team at the first base position, Lazzari proved to be a pitcher's worst nightmare as the senior paced the NEC in a host of offensive categories, including a nationally ranked batting average (.412), hits (70), RBI (51), home runs (16) and total bases (129). Hailing from Reno, NV, the infielder's ability to get on base was one of the reasons the Seahawks bested the league with 231 runs scored and averaged 4.5 runs per game. Now a three-time all-NEC first teamer (2006, 2008, 2009), Lazzari became the owner of the Conference's single-season home runs record (16), while she also shares WC's all-time record with 33 career long balls. A two-time *Akadema* NEC Player of the Week earlier in the season, Lazzari's steady glove on the defensive end resulted in a league-high 338 putouts.

Throughout LIU's Conference portion of its schedule, Porter registered a league-low 0.55 ERA while limiting opponents to a .135 batting clip, also the best mark on the circuit. Marking the third straight year the junior has been honored with all-NEC recognition, Porter also earned a spot on the league's weekly honor four times throughout the year. During the final weekend of regular season NEC competition, Porter tossed a pair of complete game one-hit shutouts, fanning seven and walking one. The junior's performance in a highly anticipated match-up with Robert Morris on Apr. 15 helped the Blackbirds secure sole possession of the NEC regular season crown. In the 3-0 opening triumph, Porter struck out two and allowed just one hit. A day later against Saint Francis (PA), the Redmond, WA product fanned five and scattered another lone hit to help LIU post its second straight shutout.

In a freshman campaign that saw Schwartzburg earn two *Akadema* NEC Pitcher of the Week awards to go along with a pair of *Akadema* NEC Rookie of the Week honors, the righthanded hurler finished atop the league having struck out 206 batters - 63 of which were caught looking - throughout 200.0 innings of work. Schwartzburg also racked up 15 wins to tie for third in the league. On Apr. 25, the Mission Viejo, CA product threw a complete game one-hitter en route to logging her fifth shutout of the season.

Joining Lazzari and Porter on the all-NEC first team are a quartet of Blackbirds, including junior **Mariesha Marker (Keizer, OR/McNary)**, sophomore **Bianca Mejia (Sylmar, CA/El Camino Real)**, senior **Renae Beauchman (Eagle Rock, CA)** and freshman **Sterling Hoham (Norco, CA/Riverside Christian)**. Spending most of her time behind the plate, Marker caught 13 baserunners stealing (T-4th in NEC) and picked up where she left off last season by creating havoc on the basepaths, ranking among the top-10 on the loop with 10 stolen bases of her own (9th in NEC). Mejia, the possessor of the league's second-best batting clip (.404) and top on base percentage (.486), connected for 61 hits (2nd in NEC) to help the Blackbirds notch their second straight 17-win NEC slate. A powerful swing helped Mejia become LIU's single-season home run leader (13) en route to becoming the most recent addition to the league's weekly honor roll on May

(2009 NEC Softball All-Conference Team Release; Page 1-of-3)

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

4. The shortstop also had a hand in LIU's top fielding percentage (.961) as Mejia totaled 118 assists (1st in NEC) and 63 putouts. With a perfect 1.000 fielding mark from the outfield position, Beauchman was also productive from inside the batter's box as she landed among the top-10 hitting .351 (7th in NEC) and posted an on base percentage of .401 (10th in NEC). The lone freshman NEC first-teamer, a well-rounded Hoham contributed 16 runs scored as a utility player to share the fourth slot on the squad, while her 16 RBI rounded out LIU's top-five.

Representing Monmouth on the all-NEC first team are junior second baseman **Alexis Ferrara (West Caldwell, NJ/James Caldwell)** and sophomore outfielder **Emily deLong (Rothschild, WI/DC Everest)**. Ferrara and deLong ranked fifth and third on the loop, respectively, hitting .380 and .391. Not east for a pitcher to retire on Ks, Ferrara's .047 strikeout average ranked among the top-30 in the nation as of Apr. 26. Also a dangerous presence at the plate, deLong slugged .917 (1st in NEC) and crossed the plate a NEC-high 48 times. Clutch at bats also resulted in the Rothschild, WI product knocking in 43 runs to share second place on the circuit, while her heavy hitting generated eight triples (1st in NEC) and 15 round trippers (2nd in NEC). The combination of Ferrara and deLong boosted the Hawks' attack as they bested the league in extra-base hits with 61 doubles and 17 three-baggers.

Rounding out the first-team selections are the Wagner duo of junior **Kate Eshelman (Reno, NV/McQueen)** and senior **Jaclyn Vanore (Palisades Park, NJ/Paramus Catholic)**, along with Robert Morris senior **Brooke Panepinto (Belle Vernon, PA/Belle Vernon)** and Sacred Heart senior **Jen Russell (Seymour, CT/St. Joseph's)**. An all-NEC performer in 2007, Eshelman scored 32 runs (5th in NEC) for the Seahawks, adding 50 hits (T-9th in NEC) and 27 RBI (T-8th in NEC). The keen eye of teammate Vanore, also a previous all-NEC honoree (2006, 2007, 2008), generated 16 walks (T-8th in NEC), while her .303 batting average was the fourth-best mark on the team. Panepinto capped off her career as a Colonial ranked third on the squad in hitting (.323), slugging percentage (.408), on base percentage (.379), runs scored (21) and hits (42). Russell returns to the all-NEC ranks for the second straight year since besting the league with a 1.58 ERA. The senior Pioneer was especially tough against NEC competition as she maintained an earned run average of 0.95.

LIU is home to an additional three all-NEC honorees as junior second baseman **Brynn Lewis (Woodinville, WA/Woodinville)**, sophomore **Amanda MacIntosh (West Hills, CA/El Camino Real)** and senior hurler **Jenny Giles (Melbourne, FL/Eau Gallie)** were named to the second team. Lewis' 41 hits and 12 runs scored enhanced a Blackbird offense that outscored their league opponents 96-21, while third baseman MacIntosh enjoyed a stellar sophomore campaign that included a 10-game hitting streak earlier in the season. An all-league performer in each of her four years as a Blackbird, Giles added 16 wins (2nd in NEC) this past season, which resulted in the title of LIU's all-time wins leader. The milestone came on Apr. 18 when Giles earned her 66th career victory with a 3-0 blanking of Central Connecticut State. The righty's 1.60 earned run average was good for second on the loop, which helped LIU finish the regular season besting the league with 1.73 ERA and .227 opponent batting average.

Also landing a trio of representatives on the all-NEC second team was SHU. Sophomore first baseman **Courtney Lee (Camarillo, CA/Oaks Christian)** registered a .410 batting clip during league play (T-3rd in NEC), while classmate **Taylor Froelich (Garden Grove, CA/Pacifica)** was right behind hitting .406. Froelich, an outfielder, added 28 hits against NEC rivals (1st in NEC), including six doubles (T-1st in NEC), and totaled the league's second-best mark accumulating 48 bases. Senior **Amanda Bradley (Langley, BC/Brookwood Secondary)** rounded out the Pioneers' top-three hitting .287.

Robert Morris rookie **Alexa Bryson (Greensburg, PA/Greater Latrobe)** began her Colonial career on a high note as the righthander notched the most wins (19) and placed among the top-five in ERA (2.26, 5th in NEC), innings pitched (179.2, 4th in NEC), batters struck out (184, 2nd in NEC) and batters struck out looking (62, 2nd in NEC). Monmouth's **Nichole Alvarez (Brick, NJ/Brick Twp.)** completed her career as a Hawk third on the team in hitting (.322), on base percentage (.415), runs scored (27) and hits (37).

The senior duo of **Kelly Slingwine (Gibsonia, PA)** and **Nicole Waligora (Johnstown, PA/Westmont Hilltop)** represent Saint Francis (PA) as all-NEC second teamers. Slingwine, a shortstop, ended her Red Flash career as the program's all-time hits leader (187) and tied for SFPA's career doubles mark (37). The Gibsonia, PA product also owns the program's all-time stolen bases mark (53) as she topped the squad in virtually every offensive category. At the utility position, Waligora recorded a .982 fielding percentage to rank fourth on the squad as she also tallied the Red Flash's most putouts with 155.

Rounding out the all-NEC second team selections are Mount St. Marys' **Amanda Burk (Bristow, VA/Stonewall Jackson)** and Fairleigh Dickinson's **Brianne Benedict (Alliance, OH/West Branch)**. A catcher for the Mountaineers, Burk holds career records in nine categories at MSM. The senior also took the two spot on the squad hitting .313 and slugging .424, while sitting atop the Mount having scored 25 runs and connecting for 45 hits. Benedict was the Knights' top offensive weapon during her sophomore season, besting FDU with a .323 clip, 50 hits (including nine doubles), 18 runs scored and nine stolen bases.

2009 NEC Softball Award Winners

Player of the Year

Andrea Lazzari	Wagner	1B	Sr.	Reno, NV/Wooster
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Pitcher of the Year

Blaire Porter	Long Island	RHP	Jr.	Redmond, WA/Redmond
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Rookie of the Year

Heather Schwartzburg	Quinnipiac	RHP	Fr.	Mission Viejo, CA/Capistrano Valley
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Coach of the Year

Pam London/Elizabeth Luckie	Sacred Heart
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2009 NEC Softball First Team All-Conference

Name	School	Pos.	Yr	Hometown/High School
Mariesha Marker	Long Island	C	Jr.	Keizer, OR/McNary
Andrea Lazzari	Wagner	1B	Sr.	Reno, NV/Wooster
Alexis Ferrara	Monmouth	2B	Jr.	West Caldwell, NJ/James Caldwell
Kate Eshelman	Wagner	3B	Jr.	Reno, NV/McQueen
Bianca Mejia	Long Island	SS	So.	Sylmar, CA/El Camino Real
Emily deLong	Monmouth	OF	So.	Rothschild, WI/DC Everest
Renae Beauchman	Long Island	OF	Sr.	Eagle Rock, CA
Brooke Panepinto	Robert Morris	OF	Sr.	Belle Vernon, PA/Belle Vernon
Jaclyn Vanore	Wagner	DP	Sr.	Palisades Park, NJ/Paramus Catholic
Sterling Hoham	Long Island	UT	Fr.	Norco, CA/Riverside Christian
Blaire Porter	Long Island	P	Jr.	Redmond, WA/Redmond
Jen Russell	Sacred Heart	P	So.	Seymour, CT/St. Joseph's

2009 NEC Softball Second Team All-Conference

Name	School	Pos.	Yr	Hometown/High School
Amanda Burk	Mount St. Mary's	C	Sr.	Bristow, VA/Stonewall Jackson
Courtney Lee	Sacred Heart	1B	So.	Camarillo, CA/Oaks Christian
Brynn Lewis	Long Island	2B	Jr.	Woodinville, WA/Woodinville
Amanda MacIntosh	Long Island	3B	So.	West Hills, CA/El Camino Real
Kelly Slingwine	Saint Francis (PA)	SS	Sr.	Gibsonia, PA
Taylor Froelich	Sacred Heart	OF	So.	Garden Grove, CA/Pacifica
Nichole Alvarez	Monmouth	OF	Sr.	Brick, NJ/Brick Twp.
Brianne Benedict	Fairleigh Dickinson	OF	So.	Alliance, OH/West Branch
Amanda Bradley	Sacred Heart	DP	Sr.	Langley, BC/Brookwood Secondary
Nicole Waligora	Saint Francis (PA)	UT	Sr.	Johnstown, PA/Westmont Hilltop
Jenny Giles	Long Island	P	Sr.	Melbourne, FL/Eau Gallie
Alexa Bryson	Robert Morris	P	Fr.	Greensburg, PA/Greater Latrobe