

Northeast Conference

399 Campus Drive • 1st Floor • Somerset, NJ 08873
(732) 469-0440 • Fax (732) 469-0744 • www.northeastconference.org



For Immediate Release
May 9, 2009

Sacred Heart Captures First Ever NEC Tournament Title *SHU's Jen Russell Named Tournament MVP*

Brooklyn, NY -- Behind 2009 Northeast Conference Tournament MVP, Jen Russell, the Pioneers of Sacred Heart captured their first ever tournament crown. Russell went the distance for SHU, blanking a LIU squad that was shutout just once in league play during the regular season. The Pioneers, who extended their winning streak to 12 games, will receive the conference's automatic berth to the NCAA tournament. Earlier in the day LIU topped fourth-seeded Monmouth in a rematch of game one of the tourney. LIU's Blaire Porter, the 2009 NEC Pitcher of the Year, tossed all seven innings, striking out three.

Championship Game: #3 SHU 4, #1 LIU 0

Queens, NY -- Sacred Heart shutout Long Island by a score of 4-0 in the title game of the 2009 Northeast Conference Softball Tournament, bringing the Blackbirds' four-year title run to a halt.

The Pioneers wasted little time putting runs on the board as they took a 1-0 lead in their first at bat. With runners on first and second, senior second baseman **Betsy Harvey (Unionville, CT/Farmington)**, who was later named to the all-tournament team, knocked in a run with a single. All-NEC first team pitcher and 2009 NEC Softball Tournament MVP **Jen Russell (Seymour, CT/St. Joseph's)** produced a quick 1-2-3 bottom half of the inning with the help of her infield.

Russell continued to keep the Blackbirds at bay, allowing her opponents to reach third base once the entire game in the bottom of the fourth. Similarly, LIU's **Blaire Porter (Redmond, WA/Redmond)** gave her team a chance for a comeback by hindering the SHU attack for four straight frames, but the Pioneers broke through in the top of the sixth with a pair of insurance runs. Senior third baseman **Jessica Perez (Santa Maria, CA/St. Joseph)** opened the stanza with a single, while sophomore **Courtney Lee (Camarillo, CA/Oaks Christian)** reached first by virtue of fielder's choice on a bunt. Senior **Amanda Bradley (Langley, BC/Brookwood Secondary)** laced a single up the middle, putting two on just in time for **Adrian Fitzsimon (Sacramento, CA)** to step up to the plate. Fitzsimon, who was also later chosen for the all-tournament team, notched a single bringing around Lee for the score. Two batters later, sophomore **Jasmin Vicente (Wantagh, NY/St. Anthony's)** dropped a bloop on the infield, causing chaos and enabling another teammate to cross the plate.

The Blackbirds continued to struggle to find an offensive spark and brought in senior all-NEC pitcher **Jenny Giles (Melbourne, FL/Eau Gallie)** for a relief appearance in the top of the seventh. Unfazed, the Pioneers tacked on one last run courtesy of a RBI single to right field from Lee, bringing around leadoff hitter **Taylor Froelich (Garden Grove, CA/Pacifica)** who lined one to left two batters earlier.

2009 NEC Women's Softball Championship

Hosted by Long Island University
on the campus of St. John's



First Round

Friday, May 8

- Game 1: #4 Monmouth 5, #1 Long Island 4
- Game 2: #3 Sacred Heart 4, #2 Robert Morris 2
- Game 3: #1 Long Island 7, #2 Robert Morris 3
- Game 4: #3 Sacred Heart 4, #4 Monmouth 1

Semifinals

Saturday, May 9

- Game 5: #1 Long Island 8, #4 Monmouth 6

Championship

Saturday, May 9

- Game 6: #3 Sacred Heart 4, #1 Long Island 0

(2009 NEC Softball Tournament Championship Recaps • Page 1-of-2)

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

LIU freshman **Sterling Hoham (Norco, CA/Riverside Christian)** notched the Blackbirds' lone hit in the final frame before Russell capped off her MVP-worthy performance forcing a ground ball right back to her and gunning LIU pinch hitter **Raylene Asman (Escondido, CA/Escondido)** down at first.

Russell tossed a complete game four-hitter, fanning two and issuing just one walk. Pacing the Pioneer attack was Lee, who finished with a 2-for-4 outing with two runs scored and one RBI.

The Pioneers will advance to the NCAA Tournament in the midst of a 12-game winning streak against an opponent to be announced on ESPNews on Sunday, May 10 at 10:00 pm.

Game #5: #1 Long Island 8, #4 Monmouth 6

Queens, NY -- Four-time Northeast Conference champion Long Island advances to the 2009 Northeast Conference softball championship game after a hard-fought contest that saw the Blackbirds hold on to an 8-6 victory.

LIU jumped out to a quick lead, scoring three runs in the first inning. With bases loaded, junior **Chelsea Martinson (Agoura Hills, CA/Agoura)** lobbed a RBI single over second base, while the very next batter, sophomore **Amanda MacIntosh (West Hills, CA/El Camino Real)** followed suit knocking in a run by finding the gap in left field. Freshman **Sterling Hoham (Norco, CA/Riverside Christian)** connected for the final hit of the inning to help Martinson cross the plate.

The Blackbirds kept the pressure on in their next at bat, racking up four more runs to push their lead to 7-0. Senior first baseman **Stephanie Savre (Simi Valley, CA)** kicked off the rally with a single, while all-NEC first team catcher **Mariesha Marker (Keizer, OR/McNary)** also notched a base hit. It was then turn for sophomore all-leaguer, **Bianca Mejia (Sylmar, CA/El Camino Real)** to step up to the plate as she cracked a RBI double. Three batters later, Mejia stole a run as she touched home on a wild pitch, while a productive Martinson picked up her second and third RBI of the game by cracking a single to right field and to cap off LIU's scoring until the seventh frame.

The Hawks saw some light in the bottom of the third when junior catcher **Jessica Nicola (South Amboy, NJ/Sayreville War Memorial)** sent a three-run shot over the fence, closing the gap to four. Helping their own cause, MU's defensive unit held strong to keep the Blackbirds off the scoreboard. MU's catalyst at the plate, Nicola led off in the bottom of the sixth with a single up the middle. Sophomore **Abby Martin (Oswego, NY/Oswego)** took advantage of the scoring opportunity as she rocked the Hawks' second homer of the game, making the score 7-5 in favor of LIU.

With tension building in the final stanza and the Hawks within reach, LIU responded to the pressure by getting runners on base, thanks in part to Hoham reaching first by virtue of an error at third base. Pinch hitter **Raylene Asman (Escondido, CA/Escondido)** put down a bunt that caused chaos on the infield, resulting in one last insurance tally for LIU.

The top of MU's batting order headed to the plate in the final frame, giving the squad hope for a late-game comeback. Sophomore all-NEC first team outfielder **Emily deLong (Rothschild, WI/DC Everest)** connected for a hit, as did senior counterpart **Nichole Alvarez (Brick, NJ/Brick Twp.)**. Once again, Nicola notched a hit to score deLong and put the Hawks within two, but the 2009 NEC Pitcher of the Year **Blaire Porter (Redmond, WA/Redmond)** refused to let the score get any closer as she concluded her complete game effort by retiring the next batter to end the contest and send the Blackbirds to the title game to face a red-hot Sacred Heart squad.