

# Northeast Conference

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## NEC Field Hockey Preseason Poll Pins Familiar Favorite Role on Lock Haven *Two-time defending champion Eagles Expected to Lock Up Another Title*

**Somerset, NJ** -- Two-time defending champion Lock Haven is a near-unanimous choice to capture the 2008 Northeast Conference field hockey crown according to a vote of the league's eight head coaches. The Lady Eagles, who have won the NEC regular season title during each of their four years as a conference member, garnered six first-place votes in the annual preseason poll. Quinnipiac, a three-time NEC champion, earned a first-place nod in taking second in the poll, while Rider, last season's runner-up, claimed the third spot and the lone remaining first-place vote. Coming off appearances in the 2007 NEC Tournament, Sacred Heart and Saint Francis (PA) took fourth and fifth, respectively. Monmouth claimed sixth place followed by Robert Morris and Siena.

All eight conference members are slated to begin the 2008 campaign during the weekend of August 29-31 with league play commencing on October 10.

Since joining the NEC in 2004, **Lock Haven (17-6, 7-0 NEC)** has experienced unmatched success in winning 29 of 31 regular season contests. The NEC preseason favorites return the conference's top two goal scorers from a year ago. LHU's foes would likely not have groaned if two-time NEC Player of the Year **Blair Wynne (Arima, Trinidad & Tobago/Sangre Grande)** had opted not to exercise her fifth year of eligibility, but the two-time league scoring champ will join sophomore forward, the 2007 NEC Rookie of the Year, up front for another title quest. Starting in all 23 of Lock Haven's games last season, Hordendorf scored the second-most goals (14) in the league behind Wynne's 17.

LHU Junior **Suzann Hobart (Lewisberry, PA/Red Land)** further bolsters veteran head coach **Pat Rudy's** front line. A 2007 first team all-NEC selection, Hobart tallied 12 goals and three assists in helping the Haven complete a perfect conference season for the second time in four years. Junior defender **Alana Lewis (Trinidad & Tobago/ Southeast Port of Spain)** earned NEC Defensive Player of the Year honors for her tough play in the backfield. The first team all-NEC selection poses a threat on offense as well, having accumulated four goals and six assists over 23 starts.

**Quinnipiac (5-13, 3-4 NEC)**, a mainstay in the Northeast Conference Tournament, takes second place in the preseason poll after an uncharacteristic season a year ago. The Bobcats have qualified for the league's four-team, postseason tournament in eight of the ten seasons they have been a NEC member with last year and 2004 being the only exceptions. A promising group of returnees that includes three second team all-NEC players has attracted the attention of the league's head coaches. Senior goalkeeper **Jenna Grossman (Flanders, NJ/Mt. Olive)**, the 2006 NEC Rookie of the Year, cut her goals-against average down to 1.77 against league opponents on her way to all-league honors. Veteran head coach **Becca Kohli** has the luxury of playing an all-conference returnee up front and in the midfield as well.

### 2008 Northeast Conference Field Hockey Preseason Coaches Poll

1. Lock Haven (6)
2. Quinnipiac (1)
3. Rider (1)
4. Sacred Heart
5. Saint Francis (PA)
6. Monmouth
7. Robert Morris
8. Siena

*First place votes in parentheses*

(2008 NEC Field Hockey Preseason Poll Release; 1-of-2)

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

Sophomore forward **Megan McCreedy (White River, South Africa)** played in all of Quinnipiac's 18 games as a rookie, notching seven points (3G, 1A) and 17 shots. Senior midfielder **Megan Sciascia (Cheshire, CT/Cheshire)** did not miss a game either.

**Rider (11-9, 6-1 NEC)** nearly orchestrated a championship game upset that would have landed the Broncs their fourth NEC crown this decade, but Lock Haven responded with three unanswered tallies to sink Rider's hopes. Returning two talented sophomores as part of a battle-tested roster, head coach Lori Hussong's team looks to qualify for the conference tournament for the ninth consecutive season. **Magaret Ecke (New Egypt, NY/New Egypt)** and **Amanda Barretta (Roseland, NJ/West Essex)** did not miss a single game during their rookie campaigns. Ecke, first team all-NEC selection in the midfield, finished second on team, and sixth in NEC, in assists. Barretta's freshman season included three goals, two of which were game-winners. Her goal in the 55th minute of the Broncs' NEC semifinal bout broke a 1-1 tie and propelled Rider past Sacred Heart and into its sixth final this decade.

The Broncs also have the experienced and accomplished **Tricia Crotty (Lewistown, PA/Indian Valley)** up front. Crotty, the 2005 NEC Rookie of Year, earned NEC All-Tournament Team honors for the second time in her career last season. The senior forward, who was the league's fifth-leading goal scorer last season, has not missed a start during her 59-game collegiate career. Crotty was ranked in five categories in the NEC including shots (fourth) and shots per game (fourth), goals (fifth), goals per game (sixth), points (seventh), and assists (10th). Junior **Lyndsie Johnson (Gibbsboro, NJ/Eastern)** found herself behind an all-league goalie in each of the previous two seasons, most recently backing up 2007 NEC Goalkeeper of the Year Jennifer LoCastro. The junior keeper, who saw action in one game, along with two freshmen newcomers will get an opportunity to claim the starting job.

**Sacred Heart (8-11, 4-3 NEC)**, a NEC Tournament qualifier for each of the past eight seasons under head coach **Chris Blais**, is a threat to recapture the crown it held in 2005 thanks in part to senior **Carisa Eye (Neconset, NY/Smithtown)**. The 2006 NEC Offensive Player of the Year, Eye scored 13 goals in 18 games in notching her second straight selection to the all-NEC first team and running her career goal total to 55. With one of the league's most prolific scorers in the offensive end, senior **Amy Hendricks (Milford, PA/Delaware Valley)** brings all-NEC credentials to the defensive midfield. In 2007, Hendricks spearheaded a defensive effort that yielded the third fewest goals during conference play while also firing 47 shots on offense.

**Saint Francis (PA) (4-13, 4-3 NEC)** will attempt to make the Northeast Conference Tournament part of its annual routine following a watershed season in 2007. The Red Flash's breakthrough season included a school-record four conference wins and the young program's first-ever postseason appearance. Although the 2007 NEC Coach of the Year Liz de Simas no longer presides over the program, senior goalie **Erin Reifsteck (Battle Creek, MI/Saint Phillip)** amongst others should help ease the transition for first-year head coach **Stacey Bean**, who most recently served at the helm of Rhode Island's program from 2002-06. Reifsteck was amongst the national leaders with a conference-high 9.62 saves per game. Senior forward **Belen Albanes (Atlanta, GA/Dunwoody)**, the Red Flash's scoring leader, was one of the league's more potent offensive players in scoring 10 goals last season.

**Monmouth (4-12, 3-4 NEC)** head coach Carli Figlio has three all-conference returnees to work with as she tries to bring the Hawks back to the NEC Tournament during her second season at the helm. Absent from the four-team postseason classic since 2004, Monmouth nearly qualified last year, but its late-season surge came up short during the final weekend of regular season play. Sophomores **Katie Amundsen (Berlin, NJ/Eastern)** and **Morganne Firmstone (Honesdale, PA/Honesdale)** each made 15 starts during their rookie campaigns. Firmstone, a defender, will try to tighten up a unit that surrendered 3.81 goals per game last season. Amundsen, a versatile force in the midfield, and fellow second team all-NEC midfielder **Molly Passarella (Atco, NJ/Hammonton)** were vitally important to turning the Hawks' 2007 season around after a slow start.

**Robert Morris (3-15, 0-7 NEC)**, a program since 2004, hopes to elevate itself to the next step under second-year head coach Olivia Netzler. The Colonials have struggled during their infancy, having won only three games in each of the past two seasons, but things appear to be on the way up for Netzler's squad. Junior defender **Jenna Charles (Lancaster, PA/Lampeter-Strasburg)** returns for a defense that allowed the third-fewest goals in the NEC last year and welcomes three exciting freshmen into the fold. **Mary Kate Egan (Lynch, ND/Kent County)** brings valuable experience on the attacking end, having started in 46 contests over the past three seasons.

**Siena (2-12, 1-6 NEC)** looks to grow in the second year of head coach **Bill Davidson's** tenure. Juniors **Kristin McGorty (Wappingers Falls, NY/John Jay)** and **Amanda Caso (Carmel, NY/Carmel)**, who scored three goals apiece last season while starting in all 14 games, will look to increase their offensive output for the Saints. One of the league's more physical defenders, sophomore **Brittany Moran (Putnam Valley, NY/Putnam Valley)** anchors the backfield.

(2008 NEC Field Hockey Preseason Poll Release; 2-of-2)