

For Immediate Release
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Mount St. Mary's Tabbed As NEC Preseason Women's Lacrosse Favorite ***Mountaineers Seek Second Consecutive NEC Title***

Somerset, NJ -- Mount St. Mary's has been picked as the preseason favorite to win the 2005 Northeast Conference women's lacrosse championship, according to a poll of league head coaches. The Mountaineers earned seven of nine first place votes, followed by Monmouth who received the remaining two first place votes. Quinnipiac and Sacred Heart were chosen third and fourth, respectively, followed by Wagner, Long Island, Central Connecticut State and St. Francis (PA). Robert Morris, competing in its inaugural season, rounds out the poll.

Mount St. Mary's is coming off the most successful season in school history, culminating with its first-ever trip to the NCAA Tournament. Under the direction of 2004 NEC Coach of the Year Courtney Martinez Connor, the Mountaineers posted a 15-5 overall record and went undefeated in conference play (7-0). The Mount returns five players from the 2004 all-conference team, including first team selections senior **Erin LaMotte (Hampstead, MD/North Carroll)** and junior **Jennifer Davison (Riva, MD/South River)** and second teamers junior **Kirby Day (Forest Hill, MD/North Harford)** and junior **Leeann Robustelli (Downington, PA/Bishop Shanahan)**, as well as the 2004 NEC Rookie of the Year, **Katie Mason (Ellicott City, MD/Mount Hebron)**. The Mountaineers return their two leading point scorers from last season in Mason and LaMotte. LaMotte led the squad in points, tallying 50 points on 40 goals and 10 assists, while Mason registered 49 points (31g, 18 a) in 2004. Day added 18 goals and 4 assists for the Mountaineers. The 2004 NEC Player of the Year, and a first team all-NEC selection, **Naomi Campano Radio (Schnecksville, PA/Allentown Central Catholic)** will return as a graduate student to mind the net for the Mountaineers. Campano Radio led the NEC in saves (225), save percentage (.562) and wins (15), and ranked third in the conference in goals against average (9.07) last season. All-conference defenders Davidson and Robustelli will assist Campano Radio in anchoring the Mountaineers' backfield. Davidson led the Mount in caused turnovers (34) last year, while Robustelli tallied 50 ground balls and caused 26 turnovers.

After falling 11-10 to Mount St. Mary's in last year's NEC championship game, Monmouth is hungry for another chance at the title. The Hawks return a pair of 2004 first team all-conference selections in juniors **Andrea Denton (Catonsville, MD/Catonsville)** and **Kaitlyn Robinson (Huntington Station, NY/St. Anthony's)**. Robinson contributed seven points (5g/2a) from the midfield last season, while also posting 42 ground balls and 32 caused turnovers. Denton registered 41 ground balls and caused 27 turnovers, and anchored a defense that ranked second in the league in goals against average (8.94). Sophomore **Katie Degen (Glen Head, NY/North Shore)**, a second team selection in 2004, returns in the midfield for the Hawks. Degen tallied 22 goals and 17 assists in her freshman campaign, finishing the season fifth in the NEC in assists per game (1.00).

Quinnipiac and Sacred Heart both enter the season attempting to win their first-ever NEC championship. Quinnipiac returns its top three scorers from 2004 in seniors **Amy Willis (Hingham, MA/Hingham)** (38g, 17a) and **Christy Smallman (Boxford, MA/Masconomet)** (28g, 27a), and junior **Jennifer Larson (Islip Terrace, NY/East Islip)** (33g, 10a). Smallman ranked first in the NEC in assists (27) and was tied for third in the conference with Willis for points per game (3.24). Second team defender **Vanessa Miranda (Bay Shore, NY/Bay Shore)**, who collected 29 ground balls and caused 43 turnovers last season, will be looked upon to anchor the Bobcats' defense. Sacred Heart will turn to seniors **Lindsay Travis (Mahopac, NY/Mahopac)**, **JoAnn Montesarchio (Cortlandt Manor, NY/Cortlandt Manor)** and **Natalie Smith (Wantagh, NY/Wantagh)** for leadership. Smith (36g, 8a) and Montesarchio (24g, 9a) return as the Pioneers' leading scorers, and Travis will spearhead a defense that led the NEC in goals against average (7.45) last season.

The 2005 NEC Women's Lacrosse Tournament, hosted by the high seed, will take place on April 29th and May 1st. The top four regular season teams will advance to the league playoffs. The winner of the NEC Tournament will then host the MAAC champion in a NCAA Tournament Play-In game.

2005 Northeast Conference Lacrosse Preseason Coaches Poll

1. Mount St. Mary's (7)
2. Monmouth (2)
3. Quinnipiac
4. Sacred Heart
5. Wagner
6. Long Island
7. Central Conn. St.
8. St. Francis (PA)
9. Robert Morris

First place votes in parentheses