

# Northeast Conference

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## St. Francis (PA) Named Preseason Favorite To Win Men's Cross Country Title *Red Flash Seeking Sixth Title in Seven Years*

**Somerset, NJ** -- For the third consecutive year, St. Francis (PA) was selected by league head coaches as the heavy favorite to win the 2005 men's cross country championship. The Red Flash won five consecutive NEC titles before being dethroned last season by Quinnipiac, which was picked second in this year's poll. The Red Flash received nine out of eleven first place votes, with the Bobcats receiving the two remaining first place votes. Robert Morris was chosen to finish third followed in order by Monmouth, Mount St. Mary's, Long Island, Sacred Heart, Wagner, Central Connecticut State, Fairleigh Dickinson and St. Francis (NY).

**St. Francis (PA)** will be led by one of the conference's most accomplished distance runners in senior **Ryan Sheehan (Pittsburgh, PA/Baldwin)**. Sheehan is a two-time NEC Most Outstanding Performer and has competed at the NCAA Championships twice during his career. Seniors **Patrick Quinn (Glen Ellyn, IL/Saint Francis Prep)** and **Kyle Ridington (Malvern, PA/Marion Center)**, along with sophomore **Michael Tilger (Collegeville, PA/Archbishop Carroll)** are expected to join Sheehan as the core of the Red Flash team. In 2004, Quinn and Ridington finished fifth (26:15.7) and ninth (26:24.4), respectively, at the NEC Championships. For his seventh place finish (26:18.3), Tilger was tabbed NEC Rookie of the Year. With a year of collegiate experience under their belts, sophomores **Nicholas Brousse (Carlisle, PA/Carlisle)** and **David Holliday (Stonington, CT/Ledyard)** will give the Red Flash an extra boost.

**Quinnipiac** will look to defend its crown under the direction of reigning NEC Coach of the Year Ed O'Connor, as three of the team's six all-conference performers return from 2004. Despite losing Thomas Martin, who brought home the conference's individual title in 2004, the Bobcats return **Jeff Roginielewicz (Derby, CT/Derby)**, who was only seconds behind Martin to cross the tape in second place (26:01.1) last year. Senior **Greg Brink (Babylon, NY/Babylon)** and sophomore **Jacob Gurzler (Ballston Lake, NY/Shenendehowa)** also are key returnees for the Bobcats. Brink was a sixth-place finisher (26:18.0) at the NEC Championships, improving from a 21st place finish the previous year. Gurzler, a three-time NEC Rookie of the Week last season, crossed the line in eighth place (26:22.5) in his inaugural meet.

Last season, **Robert Morris** finished fourth at the NEC Championships, its best-ever finish at the event. Senior **Josh Dluhos (Glenshaw, PA/Shaler)** just missed out an all-conference nod last season after crossing the tape in 16th place (27:11.3). Also leading the Colonials will be sophomores **Cole Legge (Royersford, PA/Spring Ford)** and **Mike Booth (West Mifflin, PA/West Mifflin)**. Legge finished 20th (27:22.8) at the league meet in his freshman campaign.

### 2005 Northeast Conference Men's Cross Country Preseason Coaches Poll

1. St. Francis (PA) (9)
2. Quinnipiac (2)
3. Robert Morris
4. Monmouth
5. Mount St. Mary's
6. Long Island
7. Sacred Heart
8. Wagner
9. Central Connecticut State
10. Fairleigh Dickinson
11. St. Francis (NY)

*First place votes in parentheses*

(2005 NEC Men's Cross Country 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  
St. Francis (PA) University • Wagner College

Two other all-NEC performers return this year in Fairleigh Dickinson's **Edwin Rotich (Kericho, Kenya/MOI Forces Academy)**, who finished 10th (26:26.4), and Mount St. Mary's **Zach Emerson (Hillsboro, NH/Hillsboro-Deering)**, who finished 11th (26:27.0), at the 2004 event.

The 2005 NEC Men's Cross Country Championships will take place on Saturday, October 29 on the campus of St. Francis (PA). All eleven NEC schools compete in the championship event.