

# Northeast Conference

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## Robert Morris' Sade Logan Secures Women's Player of Year Award

*Quinnipiac's Brianna Rooney Earns Defensive Player of Year Award*

*Sacred Heart's Alisa Apo Garners Rookie of Year Honors*

*Pioneers' coach Ed Swanson Claims Coach of the Year Prize*

Somerset, NJ — Robert Morris junior guard **Sade Logan (Knoxville, TN/Chattanooga State)** received the Northeast Conference Women's Basketball Player of the Year award at the NEC's championship banquet on the eve of its 22<sup>nd</sup> annual tournament. The league announced its all-conference teams and major award recipients as an overture to Saturday's four quarterfinal match-ups, which will be played at Long Island's Wellness, Recreation, and Athletics Center. The NEC tabbed Quinnipiac junior guard **Brianna Rooney (Guilford, CT/Guilford)** its Defensive Player of the Year. Sacred Heart secured the other two chief awards with freshman guard **Alisa Apo (Freehold, NJ/St. John Vianney)** taking the conference Rookie of the Year award and head coach **Ed Swanson** bagging his second NEC Coach of the Year honor in the past five seasons.

Logan now has a piece of hardware to show for her unprecedented offensive effort. Possessing the ability to score from anywhere on the floor, the junior guard helped Robert Morris to its fourth consecutive 20-win season and produced offensive numbers never before seen in the NEC. Averaging 25.2 points per game, second-best in the nation and tops in NEC history, Logan obliterated the previous single-season school mark of 614 totals points owned by her senior teammate and fellow all-league selection **Chinata Nesbit (Washington, DC/Chipola JC)**. Her 724 points are currently tied for the conference's all-time single-season record, which was first reached by Saint Francis (PA) Jess Zinobile. Logan, who spent much of the season on the Naismith Award Watch List, had a record year from behind the arc. She has nailed an all-time league-best 110 three-pointers while enjoying a 42.8 percent success rate.

Rooney was a key player in Quinnipiac's watershed season, which has already seen a program record for wins (24) at the Division I level. The stalwart defender had much to do with the conference's top field goal percentage defense (.352). The Bobcats' leader in steals (58) brought more than just defense to the table though. A superb ball handler, Rooney owns the top assist-to-turnover ratio in the conference (1.85). Handling the ball with care, Rooney has dished out 96 total assists, which rank her seventh overall in the NEC, while turning it over only 53 times.

With SHU's opponents needing to clamp down on all-NEC selections **Kaitlin Sowinski (Hopkinton, RI/Tabor Academy)** and **Stephanie Ryan (Coram, NY/Newfield)** inside, Apo made them pay by singing the nets from the outside. Apo led all rookies in scoring at 12.0 points per game while draining 42.9 percent of her three-point tries. The freshman sharpshooter came up big on numerous occasions for Swanson; none bigger than her road performance at defending champion RMU. While Sowinski spent most of her minutes in foul trouble, Apo picked up the scoring slack. The freshman poured in a then career-high 23 points in carrying the Pioneers to a 59-57 victory. Apo upped her seasonal best to 24 points one week later in a win over Fairleigh Dickinson.

Sitting four wins shy of tying the conference's all-time NEC wins mark of 124, Swanson now has two NEC Coach of the Year awards with the first coming in 2004. His program has been the epitome of consistency since joining the conference in 1999. Sacred Heart has never finished lower than third in the regular season standings, exactly where it wound up this year. SHU has won at least 18 games in seven consecutive seasons. Sitting one win shy of a third consecutive 20-win campaign, the Pioneers will be looking to claim its second title in three years when the 2008 tournament tips off.

(2008 NEC Women's Basketball All-Conference Release; 1-of-4)

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

Three of the five all-NEC first team members lived up to their preseason billing. Long Island sophomore guard **Valerie Nainima (Suva, Fiji/St. Joseph's Secondary)**, Quinnipiac junior guard **Erin Kerner (Erie, PA/Mercyhurst Prep)**, and Robert Morris senior forward **Chinata Nesbit (Washington, DC/Chipola JC)** were all chosen to the 2008 NEC Preseason All-League Team. Joining the three on the all-conference top squad are Logan and the aforementioned Sowinski.

Nainima, the only player to win both the NEC Player and Rookie of the Year awards in the same season when she did so a year ago, did not fall into a sophomore slump by any means. Although Logan's emergence prevented the LIU sophomore from snatching a second straight Player of the Year trophy, Nainima upped her scoring output to 20.3 points per game from her 17.3 mark as a freshman. Providing production in all facets of the game from the point guard position, Nainima made a team-best 51 steals while amassing the league's fifth-highest assist total (99). A three-time Choice Hotels NEC Player of the Week award recipient this season, the second-year point guard sunk 81 three-pointers and 85.2 percent of her free throws.

Nesbit returns to the all-NEC first team for the second consecutive season after leading the league in double-doubles once again. Adding 11 double-doubles to last season's league-best 17, Nesbit is seventh amongst the league's top scorers (15.7 ppg) and third in rebounding (8.6 rpg). Not your conventional forward, the 6'0" superbly-athletic Nesbit does it all. She ranks second in the NEC with 4.11 assists per game and her 2.33 steal per contest are third-best. The dynamic Nesbit was the conference's lone player to record a triple-double this season, notching the first one in RMU team history when she scored 16 points, dished out 12 assists, and grabbed 12 rebounds in a win over Mount St. Mary's on February 25. Her 16 points on that doubly historic day catapulted her over 1,000 for her career, which has been fewer than two full seasons.

After averaging 11.2 points per game and swatting 81 shots as a sophomore, Sowinski emerged as a go-to player this season. Helping compensate for the loss of 2007 conference scoring champion Amanda Pape, Sowinski upped her output to 17.1 ppg thanks to a 54.3 percent success rate from the field that places the 6'4" center second in the NEC. Sowinski, a fierce competitor in the post, grabbed 7.1 rebounds per contest and rejected a league-best 97 shots.

Kerner was amongst the league's statistical elite in five categories. She utilized her sweet stroke to produce 16.6 points per contest, an average that ranks sixth in the league. The junior guard ranks third on the league's leader board in free throw percentage (.844) and fourth in three-point shooting (.424). Not a one-dimensional player in the slightest, Kerner can handle the ball well and make others better while doing it as evidenced by her 1.17 assist-to-turnover ratio (sixth in NEC) and 3.56 assists per game (fifth in NEC).

St. Francis (NY) senior guard **Tiffany Hill (Orange, NJ/Orange)** returned to the all-NEC second team after a one-year absence. Hill, who earned second team accolades in 2005-06, is the only member of this year's squad to have received prior all-NEC recognition. Monmouth junior forward **Jennifer Bender (Staten Island, NY/Staten Island Tech)** and Fairleigh Dickinson senior forward **Jennifer Walkling (Westminster, MD/Westminster)** made their first all-NEC appearances with each post player ranking amongst the NEC's top 10 in both scoring and rebounding. The previously-mentioned **Ryan** increases the number of Pioneers honored through the conference's post-season awards system to four while Quinnipiac junior guard **Mandy Pennewell (West Chester, PA/Villa Maria Academy)** joins Kerner as a Bobcat honoree.

Hill will graduate as one of the conference's most prolific scorers of all-time. The explosive 5'8" guard currently sits seventh on the all-time league charts with 1,746 points, a total that is second in St. Francis (NY) history. Her 81 three-pointers made this year are a SFNY single-season record and her 210 career treys top the Terriers' all-time list too. Hill's efforts this season warrant an Ironwoman of the Year award. She has played 1151 of a possible 1160 minutes through 29 games. Her 39.7 minutes per game are tops in the conference.

Bender was consistent all season long, but could not have been any better in the clutch. With Monmouth needing three wins in the season's final three games to leave no doubt about its playoff chances, the junior forward carried the Hawks into the postseason by averaging 17.3 points and 10.0 rebounds per contest during that span. For the season, she ranks ninth amongst NEC players in scoring (14.5 ppg) and second in rebounding (8.9 rpg). The Staten Island, NY native is second only to Nesbit with 10 double-doubles.

Walkling is the only NEC player who has been better on the boards than Bender. The 6'0" forward owns the league's best rebounding average at 9.8 per game. Walkling's 17.1 points per game tie her for third in the league with Sowinski while her 10 double-doubles match those of Bender. Walkling, who eclipsed the 1,000-point mark for her career in a 29-point win over Central Connecticut State on January 19, scored 20 points or more on 12 occasions this season.

In her first season of competition for Sacred Heart after transferring from cross-town rival Fairfield, Ryan was a much-welcomed addition after the loss of Pape. She contributed 13.7 points per game, the 12<sup>th</sup>-best average in the NEC, alongside Sowinski in the frontcourt. Her team-leading 8.3 rebounds per game rank fourth in the conference while her 48.6 shooting percentage sits fifth. Her nine double-doubles are another area where she ranks amongst the conference' best five.

Pennewell made good use of her team-high 32.0 minutes per game. In fact, her scoring average increased from 11.7 ppg to the conference's tenth best figure (13.7 ppg) this season despite averaging 2.6 less minutes than the 34.6 mpg she logged as a sophomore. The junior guard provides the Bobcats' with another serious three-point threat in addition to Kerner, having connected 38.6 percent of her long-distance tries.

The NEC All-Rookie Team was nearly an All-Garden State Team, but Central Connecticut State's **Kerriane Dugan (Waterford, CT/Waterford)** crashed the party. Dugan and three other New Jersey natives joined Apo, a former NJ Shore Conference standout, on the all-rookie squad. Mount St. Mary's forward **Mary Dunn (Whippany, NJ/Morris Catholic)**, Fairleigh Dickinson guard **Jasmyra Saunders (Trenton, NJ/Trenton Catholic)**, and Long Island guard **Chelsi Johnson (Egg Harbor Twp., NJ/Holy Spirit)** all represented the Garden State high school hoops well during their freshmen go-rounds at the Division I level.

Dunn was a force for Mount St. Mary's in the post, averaging 8.0 points and 7.6 rebounds per game. Her 232 points tied for third on the Mount while her 221 boards were fifth-most in the NEC. Johnson was another big presence in the post. The athletic forward tallied 7.1 points and 7.6 rebounds per game for the Blackbirds, playing one less game than Dunn. Saunders picked up two *Choice Hotels* NEC Rookie of the Week awards while averaging 8.8 points per game to rank third amongst all rookies. The second-leading rookie scorer was the lady who spoiled the Garden State party. Dugan averaged 10.0 points per game to rank 15<sup>th</sup> in the conference and provide first-year head coach Beryl Piper with a solid foundation to build upon.

## 2007-08 NEC Women's Basketball Award Winners

### Player of the Year

Sade Logan	Robert Morris	G	6-0	Jr.	Knoxville, TN/South Doyle
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### Rookie of the Year

Alisa Apo	Sacred Heart	G	5-9	Fr.	Freehold, NJ/St. John Vianney
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### Defensive Player of the Year

Brianna Rooney	Quinnipiac	G	5-9	Jr.	Guilford, CT/Guilford
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### Brenda Reilly Coach of the Year

Ed Swanson	Sacred Heart
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## 2007-08 NEC Women's Basketball First Team All-Conference

Name	School	Pos.	Ht.	Yr.	Hometown/High School
Sade Logan	Robert Morris	G	6-0	Jr.	Knoxville, TN/South Doyle
Erin Kerner	Quinnipiac	G	5-8	Jr.	Erie, PA/Mercyhurst Prep
Valerie Nainima	Long Island	G	5-7	So.	Suva, Fiji/St. Joseph's Secondary
Kaitlin Sowinski	Sacred Heart	C	6-4	Jr.	Hopkinton, RI/Tabor Academy
Chinata Nesbit	Robert Morris	F	6-2	Sr.	Washington, DC/Chipola JC

## 2007-08 NEC Women's Basketball Second Team All-Conference

Name	School	Pos.	Ht.	Yr.	Hometown/High School
Jennifer Walkling	Fairleigh Dickinson	F	6-0	Sr.	Westminster, MD/Westminster
Tiffany Hill	St. Francis (NY)	G	5-8	Sr.	Orange, NJ/Orange
Mandy Pennewell	Quinnipiac	G	5-8	So.	West Chester, PA/Villa Maria
Jennifer Bender	Monmouth	F	6-1	Jr.	Staten Island, NY/Staten Island Tech.
Stephanie Ryan	Sacred Heart	G	5-10	Jr.	Coram, NY/Newfield

## 2007-08 NEC Women's Basketball All-Rookie Team

Name	School	Pos.	Ht.	Yr.	Hometown/High School
Alisa Apo	Sacred Heart	G	5-9	Fr.	Freehold, NJ/St. John Vianney
Mary Dunn	Mount St. Mary's	G	5-11	Fr.	Whippany, NJ/Morris Catholic
Jasmyra Saunders	Fairleigh Dickinson	G	5-6	Fr.	Trenton, NJ/Trenton Catholic
Chelsi Johnson	Long Island	G	6-0	Fr.	Egg Harbor Twp., NJ/Holy Spirit
Kerrienne Dugan	Central Conn. State	F	5-10	Fr.	Waterford, CT/Waterford