

NEWPORT NEWS, Va. – The Atlantic 10 Conference released its annual women’s soccer awards on Wednesday in preparation for the 2012 Atlantic 10 Championship, which begins this Thursday, Nov. 1 at the University of Rhode Island’s Soccer Complex in Kingston, R.I.

For the second straight year, La Salle head coach Paul Royal earned Coach of the Year honors, as voted on by the league’s 16 head coaches. Dayton senior Colleen Williams was selected as the Offensive Player of the Year, while La Salle junior Courtney Niemiec was named Defensive Player of the Year. Mo Hawkins of Saint Joseph’s was named Midfielder of the Year for the second straight year, while Butler’s freshman Sophia Maccagnone was selected as Rookie of the Year.

The head coaches also selected the 12-member First and the 10-member Second All-Conference Teams. A tie in the voting resulted in co-first team goalkeepers.

In addition to the All-Conference Teams, an 11-member All-Academic team was selected, based on a vote of the women’s soccer media relations directors at each of the 16 member institutions.

Royal earned Coach of the Year honors after leading his team to a second straight unbeaten mark in A-10 play, posting an 8-0-1 conference record. The Explorers have not lost an A-10 regular season contest since October 29, 2010, marking the fifth longest streak in the country. La Salle held a 10-game winning streak before a 2-1 non-conference loss to Princeton in overtime in the final week of the regular season. The Explorers head into the Atlantic 10 tournament as the top seed for the second consecutive year.

Williams, a Titusville, N.J. native and two-time Hermann Trophy Watch List candidate, leads the Atlantic 10 in eight offensive categories, including shots (131), goals (17), assists (12) and points (46). The senior Flyer also leads the NCAA in points per game (2.56) and is second in total points (46) and assists. A top 10 candidate for the Senior CLASS award, Williams has made the A-10 All-Academic team two times and was named the 2011 A-10 Championship Most Outstanding Player. The league’s 2010 Offensive Player of the Year has led the A-10 in scoring three of her four years at Dayton.

Niemiec, a junior defender from Philadelphia, Pa., anchored a defense that ranked second in A-10 play with a 0.53 goals against average and shutout opposing teams eight times, including five conference foes. As a captain and one of three Explorers to start every game, Niemiec also contributed to the offense with three goals and four assists on the season.

Hawkins, also a Philly native, ranks sixth in the Atlantic 10 with four goals, including two game-winners in league play. The junior midfielder ranks third all-time for the Hawks in career points (61) and goals (25).

Hailing from Shelby Township, Mich., Maccagnone, a three-time A-10 Rookie of the Week selection, leads the conference with six game-winning goals, good for seventh in the NCAA. Maccagnone was an integral part of a Bulldog offense that won 11 games for the first time since the 2008-09 campaign.

The single-elimination tournament, which expanded from six to eight qualifying teams this season, begins this Thursday, when top-seeded La Salle takes on the No. 8 seeded Charlotte at 11:00 a.m. The

second match features league-newcomer Butler, who earned a No. 4 seed, against fifth-seeded St. Bonaventure at 1:30 p.m. Finishing second in the league, Dayton will face the seven seed, Massachusetts, in the 5:00 p.m. match-up, while VCU, also in its first season in the Atlantic 10, received a No. 3 seed and will play No. 6 Saint Joseph's in the final game of the day at 7:30 p.m.

Every match of the 2012 Championship is being web-streamed for free at www.atlantic10.com. Live stats, photo galleries, and game recaps will also be available on the Women's Soccer Championship Central at www.atlantic10.com

2012 Atlantic 10 Conference Women's Soccer Awards

Coach of the Year – Paul Royal, La Salle

Offensive Player of the Year – Colleen Williams, Dayton

Defensive Player of the Year – Courtney Niemiec, La Salle

Midfielder of the Year – Mo Hawkins, Saint Joseph's

Rookie of the Year – Sophia Maccagnone, Butler

FIRST TEAM

Forwards

Colleen Williams, Dayton

Moa Mattsson, Massachusetts

Courtney Conrad, VCU

Midfielders

Sophia Maccagnone, Butler

Juliana Libertin, Dayton

Renee Washington, La Salle

Mo Hawkins, Saint Joseph's

Defenders

Alysha Mallon, Dayton

Courtney Niemiec, La Salle

Shannon Van Riper, St. Bonaventure

Co-Goalkeepers

Gabrielle Pakhtigan, La Salle

Christine Neal, Saint Joseph's

SECOND TEAM

Forwards

Ashley Campbell, Dayton

Kelsey Haycook, La Salle

Becca Wann, Richmond

Wendy Acosta, VCU

Midfielders

Amanda Jones, Charlotte

Alexis Garcia, Dayton

Cristin Granados, VCU

Defenders

Kelly Mahoney, Butler

Jourdan McVicker, La Salle

Carly Edgcomb, VCU

ALL ROOKIE

Sophia Maccagnone, Butler

Maddie Kiebel, Charlotte

Ashley Campbell, Dayton

Nicole Waters, Dayton

Kristi Abbate, George Washington

Ellie Bailes, Rhode Island

Abby Maiello, Saint Bonaventure

Olivia McEachern, Saint Joseph's

Shauni Kerkhoff, Temple

Erin Lafferty, Temple

Wendy Acosta, VCU

ALL ACADEMIC

Kelly Mahoney, Butler

Alex Kubrick, Charlotte

Sarah Ann Waugh, Charlotte

Juliana Libertin, Dayton

Colleen Williams, Dayton

Sarah Senoyuti, Dayton

Kathleen Wolff, Duquesne

Jourdan McVicker, La Salle

Gabby Pakhtigan, La Salle

Renee Washington, La Salle

Moa Mattsson, Massachusetts