



WOMEN'S BASKETBALL

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Tuesday, November 6, 2007
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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HOOD, SARIO AND PILYPAITIS HEAD UP PRESEASON ALL-CONFERENCE TEAM

CAMBRIDGE, Mass.-- University of Hartford's Danielle Hood (Cortland Manor, N.Y./Walter Panas), Binghamton University's Laura Sario (Espoo, Finland/Etela-Tapiolanlukio) and University of Vermont's Courtnay Pilypaitis (Orleans, Ontario/St. Peter's) were each unanimous selections to the 2007-08 America East Women's Basketball Preseason All-Conference Team. All three players received the maximum of eight votes from coaches around the conference (coaches were not permitted to vote for their own players) and were all-conference selections from a year ago.

Rounding out the five-player team is Stony Brook University's senior forward Dana Ferraro (Middlesex, N.J./Middlesex) and Binghamton's senior center Laine Kurpniece (Riga, Latvia/Riga Secondary School 47). Both were third-team all-conference honorees last season.

Hood, a senior forward, is the only 2007 first-team all-conference player returning this year. She led the Hawks in scoring for a second-straight year with 13.1 points per game. Hood also pulled down 4.3 rebounds per game and shot at a .472 clip. She started all 34 games, including Hartford's run to the America East Championship Final and the second round of the Women's National Invitational Tournament.

Sario, one of the Bearcats' two preseason favorites, averaged 13.5 points per game in 06-07. She threw for a .787 free throw percentage, fifth-best in the conference, and a .351 field goal percentage. This second-team all-conference honoree played over 33 minutes per game last year. Sario is one reason why Binghamton received its highest preseason ranking of third this year since its inception into America East, and has won America East Championship Quarterfinal games in each of the past two years.

2007 Rookie of the Year Pilypaitis helped the Catamounts finish third in the conference last year after they were voted to finish eighth in the preseason. The sophomore was a unanimous all-rookie selection and a third-team all-conference with 13.7 points per game on her scorecard (sixth in America East). Pilypaitis also dished out 4.06 assists per game and came away with 5.3 rebounds per contest. To put the icing on her freshman resume, Pilypaitis attempted 156 three-point field goals and nailed almost 37 percent of them.

Ferraro was another third-team all-conference selection a year ago for the second-seeded Seawolves. Ferraro averaged 7.2 points per game and led the conference in rebounding with 7.7 per game. The senior will step into a crucial leadership position on the court this season after the graduation of Stony Brook's two first-team all-conference honorees last year, including the Player of the Year Mykeema Ford.

Kurpniece rounds out the preseason all-conference team. A third-team all-conference pick last season, Kurpniece finished 15th in the conference with 10.9 points per game and 11th with a team-high 5.7 rebounds per game. The center's shooting accuracy is phenomenal, hitting nearly half of her attempted field goals (.494) for third-best in the conference, and nearly 80 percent of her free throws (.787). Kurpniece is another reason for Binghamton's rising success in the conference since 2001.

For more information on America East women's basketball, including updated statistics and standings, visit www.AmericaEast.com.

2007-08 Preseason All-Conference Team

- * Danielle Hood, Sr. F, Hartford
- * Laura Sario, Sr., G, Binghamton
- * Courtnay Pilypaitis, So., G, Vermont
- Dana Ferraro, Sr., F, Stony Brook
- Laine Kurpniece, Sr., C, Binghamton

** unanimous selection*