



# BASEBALL

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## STONY BROOK TOPS PRESEASON COACHES' POLL AS FAVORITE

CAMBRIDGE, Mass.— Stony Brook University clocked in as the preseason favorite to win the 2008 America East Baseball Championship, according to a vote of all seven league head coaches. The Seawolves finished with four out of a possible six first-place votes (coaches were not permitted to vote for their own team) and 32 total points. Binghamton University received two first-place votes and 28 points to finish second in the poll for the second straight year.

University at Albany, the defending America East Baseball Champions, received the final first-place vote and ended up tied for third with the University of Maine, each team garnering 24 points. University of Vermont (21 points) was picked fifth, while University of Hartford (10) and UMBC (8) rounded out the seven-team poll.

The top four teams in the conference will advance to the America East Championship, held at the highest seed that has a field with lights, on May 22-24. The winner of the double-elimination tournament receives an automatic bid to the NCAA Championship.

Stony Brook (31-24 overall, 16-7 America East in 2007) is an experienced team having played in two consecutive America East Championships, including the title game in 2006. The Seawolves had some of the most dominating pitching in the conference a year ago, striking out a conference-best 358 batters and recording a 4.61 team earned run average (ERA). Stony Brook returns a couple of right-handed seniors to continue that trend. 2007 Pitcher of the Year Gary Novakowski (Prospect, Conn./Holy Cross HS) finished with a 5-2 record and 4.28 ERA last season, while Tom Koehler (New Rochelle, N.Y./New Rochelle) led America East in strikeouts with 87.

Binghamton (28-19, 17-5) entered last year's Championship as the number one seed having won the regular season crown. The Bearcats fell one run short of winning their first conference title in an agonizing 1-0 fashion to Albany. Left-handed pitcher Jeff Dennis (North Syracuse, N.Y.), who pitched the one-run gem against the Great Danes, finished with the third-best ERA in the conference (2.62) and only 45 hits allowed in 55 innings of work. The junior was selected to the 2008 Brooks Wallace Player of the Year Award Watch List by the College Baseball Foundation over the offseason. Dennis and senior starting pitcher Zach Groh (Reading, Pa./The Perkiomen School) hope to improve a pitching staff that was tops in the conference in 2007.

Albany (29-29, 13-11) captured its first conference championship a year ago and advanced to the NCAA Championship Regionals for the first time in program history. The Great Danes return two first-team all-conference selections from last year. Senior right-handed reliever Alexander Beaulieu (Levis, Quebec/Cardinal Regional/Jefferson C.C.) earned a conference-leading ten saves and made 24 appearances out of the bullpen. The other first-teamer, junior outfielder Dave West (Toms River, N.J./Toms River North), finished with four errors in 42 games. Albany also returns second-team all-conference junior shortstop Sean Donovan (Pleasant Valley, N.Y./Arlington) who will drive the offense in 2008.

Maine (22-31, 12-11), the four seed in last year's championship, returns seven starters and welcomes 16 newcomers to Orono. The Black Bears are a young team that landed two freshmen on the all-rookie team last year, including the Rookie of the Year, Myckie Lugauber (Mahopac, N.Y./Mahopac). Lugauber played the role of catcher and designated hitter for the Black Bears, finishing the season with a .500 slugging percentage and a league-best four rookie of the week honors. Outfielder Kevin Jackson (Wappingers Falls, N.Y./Roy C. Ketcham) joined Lugauber on the all-rookie list and returns in 2008.

Vermont (21-29, 10-13) lost its top starting pitcher from a year ago but returns junior lefty Justin Albert (Hull, Mass./Hull), who was second in the conference with a 2.21 ERA and senior RHP/1B Kyle Henry (Brattleboro, Vt./Brattleboro/UConn), who led America East with eight complete games and was tops on the team with five homers and 28 RBI. The Catamounts also will be bolstered by a pair standouts that were redshirts a year ago, lefty Joe Serafin (Tariffville, Conn./Simsbury), a first team all-conference selection in 2006, and infielder Miguel Magrass (West Roxbury, Mass./Salisbury), the 2004 America East Rookie of the Year. Expect more young stars from the Catamounts as *Baseball America* named their recruiting class one of the five best in the Northeast last fall.

Hartford (15-34, 9-14) has seen steady improvements under fourth-year head coach Jeff Calcaterra, and hopes to continue those trends in 2008. Senior standout Bill Perry (East Falmouth, Mass./Falmouth) started all but one game for the Hawks last season while hitting at a .327 clip. Perry, named the top prospect in New England by the Cape League, also hit four home runs. Junior second baseman Ben Sobocinski (Waldorf, Md./McDonough) hit .333 and was a defensive stud, making just seven errors on 152 attempts for a .975 fielding percentage.

UMBC (13-40, 4-20) is led by first-team all-conference lefthanded pitcher/first baseman Will Delawter (Frederick, Md./Chesapeake JC). Delawter made 49 starts, hit for a .365 average and drove in 38 runs. Senior Steve Evans (Finksburg, Md./Chapelgate) heads up the ptching staff, compiling over 75 innings of work last year and will be leaned on to do the same this season. Evens pitched three complete games in 2007 and had a 4.66 ERA. Head coach John Jancuska and the Retrievers are in the hunt for their first conference championship.

For more information on America East baseball including stats, schedules and more, log on to [www.AmericaEast.com](http://www.AmericaEast.com).

2008 Preseason Poll		
Rank	Team (1st-place votes)	Total
1.	Stony Brook (4)	32
2.	Binghamton (2)	28
3t.	Albany (1)	24
3t.	Maine	24
5.	Vermont	21
6.	Hartford	10
7.	UMBC	8