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Bryant Lands Two Players On 2013-14 Preseason All-NEC Men's Basketball Team

Somerset, NJ -- With the start of the 2013-14 men's basketball season just over two weeks away, Northeast Conference (NEC) head coaches have put their heads together to come up with "the best of the best" in the conference, selecting five players to the Preseason All-NEC team. Each of the five honorees are returning All-NEC performers.

The announcement of the team, along with the preseason coaches poll, was made on Tuesday at the Barclays Center in Brooklyn, the site of NEC Basketball "Social" Media Day.

Three-time defending NEC champion LIU Brooklyn is represented by senior guard **Jason Brickman (San Antonio, TX/Clark)**. He is joined by a pair of Bryant players in senior forward **Alex Francis (Harlem, NY/Holderness Prep (NH))** and junior guard **Dyami Starks (Duluth, MN/Duluth East)**. CCSU junior guard **Kyle Vinales (Detroit, MI/Phelps School)** and St. Francis Brooklyn junior forward **Jalen Cannon (Allentown, PA/William Allen)** round out the squad.

A spectacular passer both in transition and in halfcourt sets for the Blackbirds, Brickman is on a mission to rewrite the NEC recordbook when it comes to assists. The two-time All-NEC second teamer enters his senior season second on the league's career list with 719 dimes, just 85 behind all-time leader Drafton Davis of Marist, who compiled 804 from 1984-88. Further down the line, Brickman needs 228 assists - he finished with 290 as a junior when he led the nation with 8.5 apg - to crack the NCAA all-time top-10, and 281 to become just the fourth player in NCAA history to reach 1,000 for his career. Not just a distributor, Brickman led the NEC in three-point accuracy (.462), ranked seventh in free throw percentage (.798) and averaged 9.5 ppg for LIU Brooklyn during the 2012-13 season. The San Antonio native has been named to the NEC All-Tournament team in each of his three years and is 147 points away from reaching 1,000 for his career.

Coming off a year that saw him claim first team All-NEC honors, Francis has a chance to close out his Bryant career as the first player in conference history to finish with 2,000 points and 1,000 rebounds. Francis enters the 2013-14 campaign as the NEC's leading active scorer with 1,490 points and ranks second among returnees with 728 boards. Last season he finished in the NEC top-five in scoring (17.4, fifth), rebounding (8.6, third), field goal percentage (.569, third) and double-doubles (10, second). A terror in the paint and a terrific finisher on the break, the former NEC Rookie of the Year scored in double digits in 30-of-31 games as a junior.

Not surprisingly, Starks arrival in Smithfield coincided with one of the most remarkable turnarounds in NCAA history as Bryant improved its win total from two to 19 to earn a CBI bid in its first year of postseason eligibility. A lethal jump shooter with unlimited range, Starks led the Bulldogs and ranked fourth in the NEC with 17.7 ppg a year ago en-route to second team All-NEC honors. He paced the circuit with 95 three-pointers and 3.1 shots from downtown per game, while shooting an efficient 40.8 percent from outside the arc. Starks also made 84.8 percent of his free throws, good for second in the conference.

The purest of scorers, Vinales is another NEC player on pace to rank among the all-time great point producers who have come through the conference. In two years, the former NEC Rookie of the Year has already piled up 1,169 points for the Blue Devils, including a league-leading 21.6 ppg mark as a sophomore that ranked him eighth nationally. Vinales scored 20 or more points 17 times last season, and cracked the 30-point mark a league-leading five times, including a 42-point explosion at Wagner last February. He is also unafraid to take - and make - big shots. Just ask Quinnipiac, which fell victim to a last second Vinales 28-footer that clinched a 15th straight NEC playoff appearance for CCSU during the final week of the regular season. The Detroit native also ranked fourth in the league in made three-pointers (2.6/game) and fifth in free throw percentage (.804) last season, while playing an ironman-like 38 minutes per game, the most by an NEC player in five years.

With a combination of strength, athleticism and leaping ability that may be unmatched in the conference, Cannon developed into one of the NEC's premier forwards last season for St. Francis Brooklyn following an All-Rookie campaign in 2011-12. Making his presence felt in the paint on a nightly basis for the Terriers, Cannon ranked second in the conference with 8.8 rebounds per game and 10 double-doubles. He also lifted his scoring average from 8.0 ppg as a freshman to 14.7 ppg last season to rank ninth in the NEC. An above-the-rim finisher on the break, Cannon shot 55.6 percent from the field, the fifth-best mark in the league. In two years, the Allentown, PA product has snared 529 rebounds, third among active NEC players.

2013-14 Northeast Conference Preseason All-Conference Team

<u>Name</u>	<u>School</u>	<u>Pos.</u>	<u>Ht.</u>	<u>Wt.</u>	<u>Cl.</u>	<u>Hometown/High School</u>
Jason Brickman	LIU Brooklyn	G	6-0	165	Sr	San Antonio, TX/Clark
Jalen Cannon	St. Francis Brooklyn	F	6-6	220	Jr	Allentown, PA/William Allen
Alex Francis	Bryant	F	6-6	205	Sr	Harlem, NY/Holderness Prep (NH)
Dyami Starks	Bryant	G	6-2	195	Jr	Duluth, MN/Duluth East
Kyle Vinales	CCSU	G	6-1	180	Jr	Detroit, MI/Phelps School

About The Northeast Conference

Now in its 33rd year, the Northeast Conference is an NCAA Division I collegiate athletic association consisting of 10 institutions of higher learning located throughout six states. Media coverage of the NEC extends to four of the largest markets in the United States - New York (#1), Pittsburgh (#23), Baltimore (#27), and Hartford/New Haven (#30). Founded in 1981 as the basketball-only ECAC Metro Conference, the NEC has grown to sponsor 22 championship sports for men and women and now enjoys automatic access to 14 different NCAA Championships. NEC member institutions include Bryant, Central Connecticut, Fairleigh Dickinson, LIU Brooklyn, Mount St. Mary's, Robert Morris, Sacred Heart, St. Francis Brooklyn, Saint Francis U and Wagner. For more information on the NEC, visit the league's official website (www.northeastconference.org) and digital network (www.necfrontrow.com), or follow the league on Twitter, Facebook, YouTube, Instagram and Google+, all @NECsports.