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Saint Francis U's Tesa McKibben Makes History, Wins Fourth Straight NEC Women's Soccer Player of the Year Honor

Somerset, NJ -- The Northeast Conference (NEC) announced its 2013 women's soccer All-NEC teams and individual award winners on Thursday, with regular season champion Saint Francis U collecting four of the six major honors. The Red Flash's **Tesa McKibben (Cogan Station, PA/Montoursville)** was named NEC Player of the Year for an unprecedented fourth straight season, classmate **Alecia McNiff (Marietta, PA/Donegal)** took home NEC Defensive Player of the Year honors for the third straight year and SFU head coach **Brenda van Stralen** collected her fourth consecutive NEC Coach of the Year honor. McKibben was also awarded the Golden Boot, which is awarded to the athlete who scored the most points throughout the regular season. Fairleigh Dickinson senior **Sage DoVale (Lilburn, GA/Collins Hill)** was named NEC Goalkeeper of the Year and **Jennifer Peters (Slate Hill, NY/Minisink Valley)** from LIU Brooklyn received the NEC Rookie of the Year nod.

McKibben becomes the first-ever NCAA Division I four-time Conference Player of the Year. McKibben surpasses legends such as Mia Hamm (North Carolina, ACC, 1990, 1992-93), Christie Welsh (Penn State, Big 10, 1999-01), Mandy Clemens (Santa Clara, WCC, 1997-99), Brittany Timko (Nebraska, Big 12, 2004-06) and Sarah Hagen (UW-Milwaukee, Horizon 2009-11), all of whom were three-time Player of the Year honorees.

McKibben is the NCAA's active career point leader with 174 points over her career. She currently leads the nation with 48 points this season, and paces the NEC in all offensive categories, including points per game (2.53), goals (18), goals per game (0.95), assists (12), assists per game (0.63).

McNiff reeled in Defensive Player of the Year honors for the third time after leading a Red Flash defensive corps that allowed just seven goals in eight conference matches this season. She also helped Saint Francis U to four shutouts this season, including three in NEC action. No other player in NEC history besides McNiff has won the award on multiple occasions.

DoVale took home the Goalkeeper of the Year honors after leading the conference in shutouts (8) over the course of the regular season, including five in NEC play. The senior also compiled a league-low 0.70 goals against average against conference opposition and 1.26 GAA for the year.

Peters earned top billing among freshman following a regular season that saw her rank fourth in the NEC in points (15) and goals (six). Her six markers led the Blackbirds this season. She is the second Blackbird to claim the NEC Rookie of the Year award, joining Ariana Calderon (2008).

van Stralen led Saint Francis U to its third straight Northeast Conference regular season title, compiling an 11-7-1 overall record and 7-1-0 mark in conference play. Seeded first in this weekend's NEC Tournament, she will attempt to lead the Red Flash to their second NEC crown with the first coming in the 2010 season. She joins CCSU head coach Mick D'Arcy as the only coaches in league history to win four NEC Coach of the Year honors.

McKibben, McNiff and DoVale earned spots on the All-NEC first team and were joined by eight other members.

Bryant sophomore defender **Allison DeBenedictis (Norwell, MA/Norwell)** was named to the first-team for the first time in her career. DeBenedictis helped the Bulldogs post four shutouts on the year.

Playoff bound Central Connecticut had three representatives on the all-conference squad. Senior midfielder **Allison Kelley (Coventry, RI/Lasalle Academy)**, a three-time honoree, makes her initial first team appearance. Kelley was second-team all conference in 2010 and 2012. In a must-win contest over Bryant on November 1, Kelley scored the game-winning goal in overtime, her first of the season. Classmate **Jewel Robinson (Farmington, CT/Farmington)** is also a three-time All-NEC award winner. Robinson, who was tabbed to the second team as a freshman in 2010 and first team as a sophomore in 2011. The defender helped anchor a CCSU defense that yielded just eight goals in eight NEC matches. Junior midfielder **Tori Sousa (Nashua, NH/UMass)** ranks fourth in the conference with 3.00 shots per game and has collected four points this season.

Two-time defending NEC champion LIU Brooklyn was led by seasoned veteran **Shino Kunisawa (Kochi, Japan/Laramie (WY) County Community College)**. Kunisawa, a senior midfielder, played a vital role in getting the Blackbirds back to the tournament, scoring three goals this season, none bigger than her game-winner against the Mount last Sunday that lifted LIU into the postseason.

Robert Morris sports a first-team representative in senior midfielder **Johanna Kadam (Germantown, MD/Northwest)**, who ranks eighth in the NEC with 12 points this season, averaging a fifth best .80 points per game.

Saint Francis senior forward **Barbara Maros de Carvalho (Sao Paulo, Brazil/Colegio Sagrade Coraco de Jesus)** joined McKibben and McNiff on the Saint Francis U first-team contingent. Maros de Carvalho currently ranks second in the NEC with 25 points this season. Of those 25 points, 11 came in the final two weeks of the regular season, including six points in the Red Flash's 5-0 victory over Mount St. Mary's on October 25. Maros de Carvalho is second in the league in assists (9) and third in goals (8).

Wagner senior **Samantha Jensen (Ocean Gate, NJ/Central Regional)** forward rounded out the first-team. Jensen led the Seahawks with 20 points this season, thanks to a team best 10 goals, ranking her second in the NEC behind McKibben.

The NEC second-team All-Conference was full of first-time honorees. Fairleigh Dickinson claimed four spots after a program best 8-7-4 overall record and berth in the NEC Tournament. Sophomore forward **Esther Rochon (Saint Romuald, Quebec, Canada/College Francois-Xavier-Garneau)**, sophomore defender **Noelle Picone (Brick, NJ/Brick Memorial)** and junior defender **Kasey Schiavoni (West Chester, PA/Villa Maria Academy)** were joined by 2012 second-team honoree **Amanda Goulet (Quebec City, Quebec, Canada/Shattuck-St. Mary's School)**, a sophomore midfielder.

Peters, the NEC Rookie of the Year, was joined on the second team by LIU Brooklyn teammate **Shannon O'Connor (Vanetia, PA/Peters Township)**, a junior defender.

Mount senior forward **Jackie Corley (Bowie, MD/Bishop McNamara)**, Robert Morris senior defender **Alexa Sarsfield (Springdale, PA/Springdale)**, Saint Francis U freshman midfielder **Siobhan Bross (Danville, PA/Danville Area)** and Saint Francis U junior midfielder **MacKenzie Walter (Hollidaysburg, PA/Hollidaysburg)** all earned second team recognition. The two Red Flash players made it five total honorees for the Red Flash, tied with FDU for most in the league.

CCSU senior goalkeeper **Nikola Deiter (Newcastle, Australia/Corowa)** was named to the second team after earning first team accolades a year ago.

The NEC also named 11 newcomers to the All-Rookie Team.

Wagner just missed the NEC Tournament after the best season in program history with a 11-5-2 record. The young Seahawk squad had four All-Rookie honorees including midfielder **Gabrielle Davis (Freehold, NJ/Freehold Township)**, **Megan Fritz (Cape Coral, FL/Mariner)** and **Sydney McNutt (Hatboro, PA/Hatboro-Horsham)**, along with defender **Torii Rodriguez (Mission Viego, CA/Capistrano)**.

Joining the Seahawk group were Bross and **Casey Gallaher (Sidman, PA/Forest Hills)** from Saint Francis U.

LIU Brooklyn was represented by Peters, along with **Madison Gomez (Fountain Valley, CA/Fountain Valley)**, **Asha Mohiddin (Ottawa, Ontario/Louis-Riel School)**.

Fairleigh Dickinson's **Connie Lewis (Outer Cove, Newfoundland, Canada/Gonzaga Regional)** from and CCSU's **Morgan Santoro (Islip, NY/Islip)** completed the team.

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.

2013 Northeast Conference Women's Soccer Award Winners

Player of the Year

Tesa McKibben Saint Francis U F Sr. Cogan Station, PA/Montoursville

Defensive Player of the Year

Alecia McNiff Saint Francis U D Sr. Marietta, PA/Donegal

Goalkeeper of the Year

Sage DoVale Fairleigh Dickinson GK Sr. Lilburn, GA/Collins Hill

Rookie of the Year

Jennifer Peters LIU Brooklyn F Fr. Slate Hill, NY/Minisink Valley

Coach of the Year

Brenda Van Stralen Saint Francis U 10th Season

Golden Boot Award Winner

Tesa McKibben Saint Francis U F Sr. Cogan Station, PA/Montoursville

2013 Northeast Conference Women's Soccer First Team All-Conference

Name	School	Pos	Yr	Hometown/High School (Previous School)
Samantha Jensen	Wagner	F	So.	Ocean Gate, NJ/Central Regional
Barbara Maros de Carvalho	Saint Francis U	F	Sr.	Sao Paulo, Brazil/Colegio Sagrado Coraco de Jesus
Tesa McKibben	Saint Francis U	F	Sr.	Cogan Station, PA/Montoursville
Johanna Kadam	Robert Morris	M	Sr.	Germantown, MD/Northwest
Allison Kelley	Central Connecticut	M	Sr.	Coventry, RI/Lasalle Academy
Shino Kunisawa	LIU Brooklyn	M	Sr.	Kochi, Japan/Laramie (WY) County Community College
Tori Sousa	Central Connecticut	M	Jr.	Nashua, NH/UMASS
Allison DeBenedictis	Bryant	D	So.	Norwell, MA/Norwell
Alecia McNiff	Saint Francis U	D	Sr.	Marietta, PA/Donegal
Jewel Robinson	Central Connecticut	D	Sr.	Farmington, CT/Farmington
Sage DoVale	Fairleigh Dickinson	GK	Sr.	Lilburn, GA/Collins Hill

2013 Northeast Conference Women's Soccer Second Team All-Conference

Name	School	Pos	Yr	Hometown/High School (Previous School)
Jackie Corley	Mount St. Mary's	F	Sr.	Bowie, MD/Bishop McNamara
Jennifer Peters	LIU Brooklyn	F	Fr.	Slate Hill, NY/Minisink Valley
Esther Rochon	Fairleigh Dickinson	F	So.	Saint Romuald, Quebec, Canada/College Francois-Xavier-Garneau
Siobhan Bross	Saint Francis U	M	Fr.	Danville, PA/Danville Area
Amanda Goulet	Fairleigh Dickinson	M	So.	Quebec City, Quebec, Canada/Shattuck-St. Mary's School
MacKenzie Walter	Saint Francis U	M	Jr.	Holidaysburg, PA/Holidaysburg
Shannon O'Connor	LIU Brooklyn	D	Jr.	Vanetia, PA/Peters Township
Noelle Picone	Fairleigh Dickinson	D	So.	Brick, NJ/Brick Memorial
Alexa Sarsfield	Robert Morris	D	Sr.	Springdale, PA/Springdale
Kasey Schiavoni	Fairleigh Dickinson	D	Jr.	West Chester, PA/Villa Maria Academy
Nikola Deiter	Central Connecticut	GK	Sr.	Newcastle, Australia/Corowa

2013 Northeast Conference Women's Soccer All-Rookie Team

Name	School	Pos	Yr	Hometown/High School (Previous School)
Siobhan Bross	Saint Francis U	M	Fr.	Danville, PA/Danville Area
Gabrielle Davis	Wagner	M	Fr.	Freehold, NJ/Freehold Township
Megan Fritz	Wagner	M	Fr.	Cape Coral, FL/Mariner
Casey Gallaher	Saint Francis U	D	Fr.	Sidman, PA/Forest Hills
Madison Gomez	LIU Brooklyn	M	Fr.	Fountain Valley, CA/Fountain Valley
Connie Lewis	Fairleigh Dickinson	F	Fr.	Outer Cove, Newfoundland, Canada/Gonzaga Regional
Sydney McNutt	Wagner	M	Fr.	Hatboro, PA/Hatboro-Horsham
Asha Mohiddin	LIU Brooklyn	D	Fr.	Ottawa, Ontario/Louis-Riel School
Jennifer Peters	LIU Brooklyn	F	Fr.	Slate Hill, NY/Minisink Valley
Torii Rodriguez	Wagner	D	Fr.	Mission Viejo, CA/Capistrano
Morgan Santoro	Central Connecticut	M	Fr.	Islip, NY/Islip