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**For Immediate Release**  
**January 29, 2014**



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## **Northeast Conference Announces 2013 Fall Scholar-Athletes, Academic Honor Roll & Commissioner's Honor Roll**

**Somerset, NJ --** Two student-athletes from Central Connecticut and Saint Francis University, along with one each from Bryant, and LIU Brooklyn make up the 2013 Fall Scholar-Athlete award winners for the Northeast Conference (NEC). The outstanding group of honorees is led by a pair of repeat award winners in Bryant's **Eimear Black (Glengormley, Ireland/Dominican College Fortwilliam)** (cross country) and Saint Francis U's **Tesa McKibben (Cogan Station, PA/Montoursville)** (women's soccer). The award recipients also include Capital One Academic All-Americans **Kyle Harbridge (Easton, PA/Easton Area)** (football) and **Annika Foit (Hausach, Germany/Robert-Gerwig Gymnasium)** (women's volleyball).

All scholar-athlete award winners must have earned a minimum of 60 semester hours at their institution, maintained a minimum cumulative grade-point-average of 3.20 and participated with distinction as a member of a varsity team.

Along with the scholar-athletes, the NEC announced its fall Academic Honor Roll, consisting of 581 student-athletes with a 3.20 or better grade-point average. There were also 166 student-athletes named to the Commissioner's Honor Roll, recognizing those superior student-athletes with a 3.75 or better grade point average.

Central Connecticut State senior **Craig Hunt (New Milford, CT/Milford)** is the latest in a long line of Blue Devils to claim the men's cross country scholar-athlete award, joining previous honorees and former teammates Andrew Hill, Sam Alexander and Ry Sanderson. Hunt made a lasting impression in his final season, setting a new course record (26:23) to claim the NEC individual championship and spark the Blue Devils to their fifth consecutive NEC team title. In doing so he earned his fourth top-10 NEC finish and fourth All-Conference honor. The three-time NEC Athlete of the Week went on to place 25th out of 255 competitors at the NCAA regional meet, which earned him a spot at the 2013 NCAA Championships. Hunt became the first NEC harrier to qualify for nationals since the 2006 season. He also recorded a fifth-place finish at the New England Championships, leading CCSU to its first-ever team title at the event. Hunt, who hails from New Milford, CT, majors in Physical Education. He carries a 3.23 grade point average.

Bryant senior **Eimear Black (Glengormley, Ireland/Dominican College Fortwilliam)** becomes a repeat winner in NEC women's cross country after wrapping up one of the most star-studded careers in conference history. Black ran away from the field for the second straight year at the NEC Women's Cross Country Championships, crossing the tape in 17:46, over a minute ahead of the next finisher. In winning, she also sliced 48 seconds off her own course record at the Immergrun Golf Club on the campus of Saint Francis U and helped the Bulldogs to a second place finish at the event. A two-time NEC Most Outstanding Performer, three-time All-NEC selection and seven-time NEC Athlete of the Week over the course of her career, Black went on to finish 21st at the NCAA Northeast Regional, earning All-Northeast honors in the process. The Glengormley, Ireland native also

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won the Father Bede Invitational and CCSU Mini-Meet, and took second at the New England Championships. A member of the NEC Academic and Commissioner's Honor Roll each year at Bryant, Black is a Biology major who finished the fall semester with a 3.93 cumulative grade point average.

This past fall Saint Francis U senior running back **Kyle Harbridge (Easton, PA/Easton Area)** capped arguably the most prolific career in Red Flash football history, and now adds to a long list of achievements with his selection as the scholar-athlete award winner in his sport. Harbridge was tabbed to the Sports Network FCS All-America second team and Associated Press FCS All-America third team following a 2013 campaign that saw him set school records with 1,619 rushing yards and 16 rushing touchdowns. He led the NEC in rushing (147.2 ypg), and finished second in both all-purpose yardage (188.2 ypg) and touchdowns. Nationally, Harbridge ended the season second in all-purpose yards, third in rushing and 11th in rushing touchdowns. The Easton, PA product was a five-time NEC Offensive Player of the Week and was added to the Walter Payton Award Watch List midway through the season. He produced an NEC single-game season-high with 291 yards in a near-upset of a Fordham team that went on to earn an at-large bid to the FCS playoffs. Harbridge closed out his career with 4,126 rushing yards, 6,225 all-purpose yards and 36 rushing touchdowns, all school records. As adept in the classroom as he is on the field, Harbridge became the seventh SFU football player to be named a Capital One Academic All-American when he was chosen to the second team. He is currently a 4.0 graduate student working on his MBA after completing his degree in Marketing with a 3.63 grade point average.

Central Connecticut junior goalkeeper **Josef Abele (Manchester, CT/East Catholic)** claims scholar-athlete honors in men's soccer after helping lead the Blue Devils to the NEC regular season title in his first year as a starter. The second team All-NEC selection and two-time NEC Player of the Week posted a 9-5 overall record and 6-1 mark against NEC competition. He tied for the league lead with seven shutouts, and posted a 1.24 goals against average and .786 save percentage. The Manchester, CT native was also named to the NSCAA Men's Scholar All-East Region second team in December. A three-time NEC Academic Honor Roll honoree, Abele was also tabbed to the NEC Commissioner's Honor Roll as a sophomore. He has posted a 3.71 grade point average majoring in Mathematics.

The most decorated women's soccer player in NEC annals, Saint Francis U's **Tesa McKibben (Cogan Station, PA/Montoursville)** collects a second consecutive scholar-athlete award following a historical season for the senior striker. With her selection as NEC Player of the Year, McKibben earned the distinction of becoming the first four-time Division I Conference Player of the Year in NCAA women's soccer history. She led the NEC in points (54) and goals (20) for the fourth straight season, and ranked first in assists (14) for the second year running. On a national basis, McKibben ranked first in points per game (2.45), and seventh in goals (0.91) and assists (0.64) per game. By year's end she was the active NCAA leader with 177 career points, and second in both goals (70) and assists (40). McKibben was a four-time NSCAA All-Region honoree, four-time NEC Golden Boot winner, 18-time NEC Player of the Week selection and last fall was named to the watch list for the MAC Hermann Trophy, the highest individual award in collegiate soccer. She also repeated as an NSCAA Scholar All-American. McKibben, who hails from Cogan Station, PA, is a Management major who has compiled a 3.71 grade point average during her time in Loretto. She is a four-time NEC Academic Honor Roll honoree.

The honors continue to roll in for LIU Brooklyn junior **Annika Foit (Hausach, Germany/Robert-Gerwig Gymnasium)**, this year's women's volleyball scholar-athlete. The unanimous choice for NEC Player of the Year in 2013, Foit became only second player in league history to earn back-to-back Player of the Year honors after leading the Blackbirds to an undefeated finish in league play and second straight NEC Tournament championship. A five-time NEC Player of the Week, Foit led the NEC in kills per set (4.17) and total points per game (4.70), and also ranked in the top-10 in hitting percentage (.248) and services aces (0.30/set). She registered 11 double doubles, five matches with 20-plus kills and hit .306 against conference opponents. Foit, who finished the season ranked 31st in the nation in kills per set and 32nd in points per set, was named an ECAC All-Star at year's end. With a near-perfect 3.97 grade point average majoring in Chemistry, Foit became the first player in the history of the LIU program to earn Capital One Academic All-America honors with her selection to the second team. She is a three-time member of the NEC Academic and Commissioner's Honor Roll.

## 2013 Northeast Conference Fall Scholar-Athletes

<b>Sport</b>	<b>Name</b>	<b>School</b>	<b>Cl</b>	<b>GPA</b>	<b>Major</b>
Men's Cross Country	Craig Hunt	Central Connecticut	Sr	3.23	Physical Education
Women's Cross Country	Eimear Black	Bryant	Sr	3.93	Biology
Football	Kyle Harbridge	Saint Francis U	Sr	3.63 (u) 4.00 (g)	Marketing MBA
Men's Soccer	Josef Abele	Central Connecticut	Jr	3.71	Mathematics
Women's Soccer	Tesa McKibben	Saint Francis U	Sr	3.71	Management
Women's Volleyball	Annika Foit	LIU Brooklyn	Jr	3.97	Chemistry

### 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](http://www.northeastconference.org)) and digital network ([www.necfrontrow.com](http://www.necfrontrow.com)), or follow the league on Twitter, Facebook, YouTube, Instagram and Google+, all @NECsports.