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## Bryant Picked to Defend NEC Women's Lacrosse Title

Somerset, NJ -- After winning the first NEC Women's Lacrosse Championship in program history a year ago, Bryant was picked to defend its title in 2015. The Bulldogs received five first place votes in the balloting by the league's eight coaches in the annual preseason poll.

Third-year head coach and reigning NEC Coach of the Year Jill DePetris-Batcheller's Bulldogs will look to repeat the success of last year's historic season. Bryant set a school record with 15 wins last season and went undefeated in NEC play. DePetris-Batcheller and the Bulldogs have reached the championship game in each of her first two seasons and will look to lead the Bulldogs to back-to-back NEC titles this spring.

Wagner came in second place in the poll with two first place votes while Robert Morris placed third with the final first place tally. Central Connecticut, Mount St. Mary's and Sacred Heart closely followed one another to round out the top six. LIU Brooklyn and Saint Francis U finished seventh and eighth, respectively, to round out the poll.

It was a season of firsts for Bryant in 2015 as they claimed both the NEC regular and postseason championship. The Bulldogs defeated Wagner, 14-6, in the title game and reached the NCAA tournament for the first time in program history, falling to No. 7 Boston College in the first round.

The Bulldogs must replace a strong senior class, including eight starters, five of whom earned All-NEC honors. Junior attack Lauren Descalzo (Hauppauge, NY/Hauppauge) earned first team All-NEC honors last season and is the lone returning All-NEC member for the Bulldogs. Descalzo led the squad with 53 goals last season, becoming the first player in program history to record more than 50 goals. The junior attack set program records in goals, shots (116), shots on goal (92), and goals per game (2.79). Descalzo also ranked second in the NEC in goals per game (2.79) and sixth in points per game (3.05).

### 2015 Northeast Conference Women's Lacrosse Preseason Coaches Poll

1. Bryant (5)
2. Wagner (2)
3. Robert Morris (1)
4. Central Connecticut
5. Mount St. Mary's
6. Sacred Heart
7. LIU Brooklyn
8. Saint Francis U

First place votes in parentheses

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**Junior attack Nicole Britton (Monmouth Beach, NJ/Shore Regional) will also return for the Bulldogs. Britton led the Bulldogs with 53 draw controls last season, tying the single season program record while ranking fifth in the league.**

**After falling to Bryant in its first-ever NEC Championship game appearance, Wagner is prepared to make another run at the title. The Seahawks, who posted an 11-7 record a year ago, return NEC Defensive Player of the Year Shea Gegan (Manasquan, NJ/Manasquan). The junior midfielder wreaked havoc for opponents as she led the nation in caused turnovers (64) and caused turnovers per game (3.61). She also paced the NEC with 3.39 ground balls per game. Equally impressive on the offensive side, Gegan led the Seahawks in points (47) and assists (18, third in NEC).**

**Robert Morris returns junior sisters Jessica and Corey Karwacki (Sparks, MD/Hereford). Jessica, a first team All-NEC honoree, broke her own NCAA draw control record and led the nation with 216 last season. Likewise, she ranked first in DI in draw controls per game with a 12.71 clip. Corey paced the Colonials, who reached the NEC semifinals, in points (46), goals (32), and tied for the lead in assists (14). She was tabbed to the All-NEC second team.**

**Reigning NEC Goalkeeper of the Year Morgan Tuller (Randolph Center, VT/Chelsea) returns for a CCSU team that qualified for a second straight NEC Tournament last season. The junior tied for 11th in the nation in both saves (154) and saves per game (9.06) last season. Fellow All-NEC first team member Madison Hughes (Oak Bluffs, MA/Martha's Vineyard Regional) will anchor the Blue Devil defense. Hughes led the Blue Devils with 37 ground balls and tied for second with 20 caused turnovers.**

#### **Points of #NECPride**

**LIU Brooklyn sophomore attack Jenn Peters (Slate Hill, NY/Minisink Valley) became the first two-sport NEC Rookie of the Year, earning the honors in soccer and lacrosse last season. Peters was the only freshman to earn All-NEC women's lacrosse honors last season, claiming a spot on the second team. Peters led the Blackbirds with 38 goals and 15 assists in 2014.**

**Wagner featured a stifling defense last season that ranked amongst the nation's best. The Seahawks ranked first nationally in caused turnovers (241) and caused turnovers per game (13.39). Wagner also ranked sixth in ground balls per game with a 19.61 per game.**

**CCSU will look to replace its most successful class in school history. The 2014 senior class accumulated a program record 30 wins over their four year tenure.**

**Several new faces will represent the NEC as two new head coaches will make their debuts.**

**Lauren Schwarzmenn will assume the helm at Mount St. Mary's. Schwarzmenn spent time as an assistant coach at Cincinnati, San Diego State, and was most recently the recruiting coordinator and assistant coach at Stanford. At Stanford, Schwarzmenn led the Cardinal to defeat seven ranked opponents over the last two seasons, win the Mountain Sports Federation in 2013, and helped earn the programs first NCAA tournament victory, defeating No. 9 Notre Dame in the first round. As a college player, Schwarzmenn ranks 12th all-time at Johns Hopkins with 118 career points from 2005-08.**

**Tanya Kotowicz will lead Central Connecticut. No stranger to the state of Connecticut, Kotowicz comes from New Haven after spending two years as an assistant coach at Yale. At Yale, Kotowicz helped the Bulldogs reach their**

highest win total since 2008 by assembling the top scoring defense in the Ivy League last season. A UConn graduate, she was a two-time team captain and helped the Huskies to an ECAC Championship as a senior in 2005 and a top-15 national ranking.

#### **About The Northeast Conference**

Now in its 34th 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.