



Today's Scholar-Athletes ~ Tomorrow's Leaders

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Patriot League Announces 2007-08 Men's Basketball All-League Teams and Major Awards

Navy's Sprink Earns Player of the Year Honors

Center Valley, Pa. (3/3/08) – After recording its best record in Patriot League men's basketball since the 2000-01 season, Navy was rewarded with two of the League's top awards when the Patriot League Men's Basketball All-League teams and Major Awards were announced Monday. Senior guard Greg Sprink became the first Navy student-athlete to take home Player of the Year honors and Head Coach Billy Lange received Coach of the Year recognition. The All-League teams and major awards were voted on by the League's eight head coaches, who could not vote for their own teams.

The remaining two major awards went to student-athletes from Lehigh and Bucknell. Freshman Rob Keefer earned Rookie of the Year honors for the Mountain Hawks, while Bucknell sophomore Stephen Tyree received the Patriot League Defensive Player of the Year nod.

For the first time since the 2001-02 campaign, every Patriot League team had a representative earn either First or Second-Team All-League recognition. Five different schools claimed the five spots on the first team, which included Sprink, Army senior guard Jarell Brown, American junior guard Garrison Carr, Holy Cross senior center Tim Clifford and Bucknell senior guard John Griffin. The second team consisted of six players because of ties in the voting, with Lafayette senior guard Bilal Abdullah and junior guard Andrew Brown, Lehigh sophomore guard Marquis Hall, Navy sophomore guard Chris Harris, American junior guard Derek Mercer and Colgate junior guard/forward Kyle Roemer making the squad.

Five different schools were also represented on the Patriot League All-Rookie Team. Lehigh's Keefer was joined by Holy Cross guard Andrew Beinert, Navy guard Romeo Garcia, Bucknell center Todd O'Brien and Colgate guard Mike Venezia. Only freshmen in their first academic year are eligible for the All-Rookie Team.

Sprink led the Patriot League in scoring with 21.2 points per game for the season, and did even better with 23.5 ppg during League play. He was second in the Patriot League with 6.2 rebounds per contest, and placed seventh with 3.3 assists per game. Sprink made a habit of posting huge scoring efforts, and put up 30 points or more in four contests. He averaged 35 points per game in Navy's two victories over regular-season champion American, with a career-high 36 points in a 77-66 win on Jan. 30. Sprink led all Patriot League players by a wide margin with 189 made foul shots on the season, while shooting 86.7 percent at the line. Entering the League Tournament on Wednesday, he is on track to become the first Patriot League player to average more than 20 points per game since Lehigh's Brett Eppenheimer in the 1997-98 season. Sprink has 1,748 career points, good for seventh-place in the Patriot League record book.

Lange led the Midshipmen to a second-place finish after being picked to place seventh in the Patriot League preseason poll. In his fourth season at the helm, Lange led the Mids to a 16-13 overall record and a 9-5 mark in Patriot League action. It marked the most overall and League wins for the team since 2000-01. Navy started the season slow with a 3-8 record, but posted an impressive finish with wins in 13 of its final 18 games. The Mids suffered some tough losses during a 3-4 start in the first half of League action, but rose up the standings with a six-game winning streak before falling in the season finale at Colgate. The Mids will host a Patriot League Tournament game for the first time since the 2000-01 campaign when they take on No. 7 seed Bucknell in the quarterfinals on Wednesday. Lange has a 50-65 record in four seasons at Navy. He earns Navy's first Coach of the Year honor since three-time winner Don DeVoe took home the award in 1999-00.

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Keefer led all Patriot League freshmen with 8.1 points per game, and placed second in the Patriot League by hitting 44.8 percent of his three-point shots. He was a key player for a Mountain Hawks team that finished 14-14 overall and 7-7 in League action, and came up big with a pair of double-digit efforts as Lehigh won its final two contests to earn a home game in the Patriot League Quarterfinals. One of those was a career-high 17 points in a 50-39 victory over Bucknell on Wednesday. Keefer compiled six double-figure scoring games in League action. He also totaled 2.9 rebounds per contest and shot 77.8 percent from the foul line for the season. Keefer gives Lehigh back-to-back Rookie of the Year winners after teammate Marquis Hall won the school's first-ever Rookie honor last year.

Tyree filled the stat sheet for the Bison to earn Defensive Player of the Year honors. He led the Bison and placed in the top 10 in the Patriot League with 4.8 rebounds and 2.8 assists per contest. He also recorded 26 steals and was an integral component on a Bucknell defense that allowed 64.9 points per game and placed second in the Patriot League in three-point field goal percentage defense. Tyree was third on the Bison with 7.0 points per game while making nearly 60 percent of his shots. He is the second Bucknell student-athlete to earn Defensive Player of the Year recognition after Abe Badmus won the inaugural award in 2004-05.

The top four scorers in the Patriot League all earned First-Team All-League honors. After Sprink led the way with 21.3 points per game, Jarell Brown placed second with 18.5 ppg, Carr was third with 18.1 ppg and Clifford came in right behind with 17.8 ppg. Griffin did well in the scoring column as well, notching 13.2 points per contest. Sprink, Brown and Clifford all earned Second-Team All-League honors a year ago, while Griffin joined that trio on the 2007-08 preseason All-League team. Sprink, Brown, Clifford and Griffin have all gone over 1,000 points in their career.

Brown helped Army to its most wins in Patriot League play since 2001-02 by leading the team in scoring and connecting on 97-of-234 three-point shots. He hit a pair of game-winning shots in the final seconds to win Patriot League contests, including a jumper at the buzzer to beat Colgate in overtime on Feb. 9 and another to complete a 35-point effort at Navy on Jan. 27. Carr smashed a Patriot League record by recording 117 three-pointers for the year, easily clearing the old mark of 99. He connected on 117-of-262 shots from beyond the arc, and also led the League with an 87.8 percent clip from the foul line. He recorded 20 points or more in nine Patriot League games, and regular-season champion American had a 7-2 record in those contests. Carr finished second in scoring in League contests at 21 points per game. Clifford was a force in the middle once again, leading the League with 2.3 blocks per contest and pulling in 5.4 rebounds per game to go with the 17.8 point average. Clifford also placed second in the Patriot League by hitting 57 percent of his shots from the field. He was playing his best at the end of the season, scoring 25 points or more three times in the last four games. Griffin led the Bison in scoring with 13.2 points per game, and also recorded a team-high 44 steals and placed second on the squad with 81 assists. He placed in the top 10 in the Patriot League in four statistical categories this season. Griffin helped Bucknell to a 91-85 overtime win at Colgate on Feb. 6 with a 31-point effort.

Five of the six players that earned Second-Team All-League honors placed in the top 10 in the Patriot League in scoring. Andrew Brown was fifth with 16.0 ppg, with 96 three-pointers keying the effort. Roemer was right behind Brown with 15.3 ppg, and scored 18 points or more in four of the final five games as Colgate won its last four contests heading into the Patriot League Tournament. Abdullah was next with 14.7 ppg, which included a 34-point effort in a 103-99 win in overtime at Navy on Jan. 19. Harris tallied 14.4 points per contest for the Mids and led the Patriot League with 55 steals while placing fifth in assists and fourth in three-pointers made. Hall averaged 14.0 points and a League-leading 4.4 assists per contest, and came up huge with 23 points and seven assists as Lehigh clinched a quarterfinal home game with a 65-58 win over Holy Cross on Friday. Mercer averaged 12.9 points and 4.1 assists as the floor general for the Eagles, and helped American win the Patriot League regular-season crown with 16 points and seven assists in a victory over Lafayette on Saturday.

Every player on the All-Rookie team played a significant role for their squad this season. Venezia matched Keefer with 8.1 points per contest, though he did not play enough games to qualify for the Patriot League leaderboard. O'Brien averaged 4.3 points and 4.2 rebounds per contest, while Beinert and Garcia averaged 4.1 points.

The men's basketball season continues with the quarterfinal round of the 2008 Patriot League Men's Basketball Tournament on Wednesday. The four games on tap are No. 8 Holy Cross at No. 1 American, No. 5 Army at No. 4 Lehigh, No. 7 Bucknell at No. 2 Navy and No. 6 Lafayette at No. 3 Colgate. All Tournament games are played at the site of the higher seed.

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2007-08 Men's Basketball All-Patriot League and Major Awards

Player of the Year: Greg Sprink, Navy, Sr., G

Defensive Player of the Year: Stephen Tyree, Bucknell, So., G

Rookie of the Year: Rob Keefer, Lehigh, Fr., G

Coach of the Year: Billy Lange, Navy

First-Team All-League

Name, School	Pos.	Yr.	Ht.	Wt.	Hometown/High School
Jarell Brown, Army	G	Sr.	6'2	185	Cleveland, Ohio/St. Peter Chanel
Garrison Carr, American	G	Jr.	5'11	165	Bellevue, Wash./Issaquah
Tim Clifford, Holy Cross	C	Sr.	6'11	260	Walpole, Mass./Walpole
John Griffin, Bucknell	G	Sr.	6'1	185	Philadelphia, Pa./Saint Joseph's Prep
Greg Sprink, Navy	G	Sr.	6'5	205	Cardiff by the Sea, Calif./El Camino

Second-Team All-League*

Name, School	Pos.	Yr.	Ht.	Wt.	Hometown/High School
Bilal Abdullah, Lafayette	G	Sr.	6'5	200	Anchorage, Alaska/Tabor Academy
Andrew Brown, Lafayette	G	Jr.	5'11	175	Littleton, Colo./Heritage
Marquis Hall, Lehigh	G	So.	5'11	170	Portland, Ore./Jefferson
Chris Harris, Navy	G	So.	6'2	170	Mechanicsville, Va./Fork Union
Derek Mercer, American	G	Jr.	5'9	175	Jersey City, N.J./St. Anthony's
Kyle Roemer, Colgate	G/F	Jr.	6'3	215	Martinez, Calif./De La Salle

* - Six players due to ties in the voting

All-Rookie Team

Name, School	Pos.	Yr.	Ht.	Wt.	Hometown/High School
Andrew Beinert, Holy Cross	G	Fr.	6'2	175	Floral Park, N.Y./Chaminade
Romeo Garcia, Navy	G	Fr.	6'4	205	Cypress, Texas/Cypress Creek
Rob Keefer, Lehigh	G	Fr.	6'3	185	North Wales, Pa./Abington Friends
Todd O'Brien, Bucknell	C	Fr.	6'11	220	New Holland, Pa./Garden Spot
Mike Venezia, Colgate	G	Fr.	6'1	180	Westfield, N.J./Westfield

"Today's Scholar-Athletes, Tomorrow's Leaders" – The Patriot League continually demonstrates that student-athletes can excel at both academics and athletics without sacrificing its high standards. The Patriot League's athletic success is achieved while its member institutions remain committed to its founding principle of admitting and graduating student-athletes that are academically representative of their class. Participation in athletics at Patriot League institutions is viewed as an important component of a well-rounded education.