



Today's Scholar-Athletes ~ Tomorrow's Leaders

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Patriot League Announces 2008 Softball Major Awards

Lehigh and Bucknell each earn two awards.

Center Valley, Pa. – Lehigh's Lisa Sweeney became the first student-athlete in Patriot League softball history to be named both the Patriot League Player of the Year and Patriot League Pitcher of the Year. Joining Sweeney as major award winners were Bucknell's Lauren Fry, who was named the Patriot League Rookie of the Year, and Bucknell's Heather Rakosik who was tabbed the Patriot League Coach of the Year. The Patriot League major awards are voted on by the head coaches of the League's six softball teams.

Sweeney emerged as the Patriot League's top offensive threat in 2008, backing up her abilities in the circle. The junior Mountain Hawk leads the Patriot League in eight major offensive categories, including all three of the batting triple crown statistics. Sweeney is tops in the Patriot League in overall batting average (.407), RBI (45) and home runs (13). She is also first in hits (59), walks (35), total bases (107), on-base percentage (.516) and slugging percentage (.738), while ranking second in runs scored (41). Her 35 walks this season are a Patriot League single-season record and she is in the top five on two other offensive single-season lists, including tying for third in home runs and ranking third in RBI. She is one home run away from breaking into the Patriot League's career top 10 list with 16. For the first time in her career, she was named All-Patriot League for a position other than pitcher, earning second-team status in 2008 as an outfielder. Sweeney joins two other Mountain Hawks that have been named Patriot League Player of the Year. Kim Miller won the award outright in 1995 and shared it in 2006 and Kate Marvel was the recipient a year ago.

Sweeney picked up her third Patriot League Pitcher of the Year award in as many years playing in the League. She is only the second pitcher in Patriot League history to win the award three times and the first to do so outright. Holy Cross' Genoa Grosch was named the Patriot League Pitcher of the Year in 1996 and 1999 and shared the honor in 1998. As a mirror to her success at the plate this year, Sweeney also ranks first in the Patriot League in all three pitching triple crown categories with a 1.44 ERA, 22 wins and 260 strikeouts. She also paces the League in shutouts (seven), opponent batting average (.185), innings pitched (170.1) and complete games (21). Her 10.7 strikeouts per seven innings rank fourth in the nation. Earlier this year she set the Patriot League single-season mark for strikeouts, while her 22 wins are second on the single-season chart. She owns the top spot on the single-season victories list with 26 in 2006. The three-time First-Team All-Patriot League pitcher is the League's career leader in wins (67) and strikeouts (643).

Fry was tabbed a First-Team All-Patriot League selection as an outfielder after sporting a .380 batting average in League games with 27 hits and 18 RBI. Overall she owned the fifth-best batting average in the Patriot League at .343 and totaled 32 runs and 30 RBI. Her 30 RBI were first among Patriot League freshmen and fifth in the League overall. She collected 46 hits, including 10 doubles, two triples and two home runs. She ranked in the top 10 in nine different offensive statistical categories, including hits, doubles, triples, runs, RBI, walks (17), total bases (66), on-base percentage (.429) and slugging percentage (.493). The Patriot League began awarding the Rookie of the Year honor in 2002 and Fry is the first Bison to be recognized.

Rakosik led the Bison back to the Patriot League Tournament for the first time since 2005 and for the second time since she began coaching in Lewisburg, Pa. She guided Bucknell to a 13-7 Patriot League mark to tie for second in the League standings and a 22-27 overall record. The Bison improved by six wins in Patriot League play and seven in overall games from a year ago. The fourth-year head coach placed a League-high six players on the All-Patriot League Team. In Patriot League games, Bucknell was first in both team batting (.344) and team pitching (2.59) and second in fielding percentage (.965). This is the first-ever Patriot League Coach of the Year award for Rakosik and the fifth for Bucknell as Terrie Grieb won the award in 1994, 1996 and 1999 and Janelle Breneman was the honoree in 2004.

The 2008 Patriot League Tournament will take place Thursday-Saturday, May 8-10 at Lehigh University's Kaufman Field in Bethlehem, Pa. The top-seeded Mountain Hawks will take on No. 4 Army at 2 p.m. on Thursday, while No. 2 Lafayette will play No. 3 Bucknell at 4 p.m. Three games will take place on Friday, while one or two (if necessary) games will be played on Saturday.

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"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.

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