

NEWS FROM THE *SOUTHERN CONNECTICUT CONFERENCE*

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SportsCenter of Connecticut/SCC Scholar Athletes of the Month for December *Sixteen Outstanding Student-Athletes Recognized*

New Haven, CT – Sixteen student-athletes from eight high schools have been named The SportsCenter of Connecticut/Southern Connecticut Conference Scholar Athletes of the Month for December.

“Many thanks to the Sports Center of Connecticut for its continuing support of the SCC and the Scholar Athlete of the Month program,” said SCC Commissioner Al Carbone. “To recognize a group of outstanding young men and women who are truly the ‘best of the best’ solidifies what this conference is all about.”

Student athletes who are selected must be a varsity letterwinner and have a 3.0/B average while demonstrating leadership qualities such as: being a positive role model; helping teammates overcome adversity; showing a commitment to self-improvement; or putting the needs of the team before themselves. Recipients receive a certificate, commemorative tee-shirt and a SportsCenter of Connecticut activity pass.

December 2007 SCC/Sports Center Scholar Athletes of the Month

Gabriella Wilson, Mercy

A three-sport (cross country, indoor and outdoor track) standout for the Tigers, Gabriella is an exemplary student with a 4.13 grade point average and class rank of three. The winner of the Mount Holyoke Book and RPI Math and Science Achievement awards, Gabriella is extremely active in her school and local communities. She also served as captain of the Mercy cross country squad in 2007. Mercy indoor track coach John Hastings said, “Gabriella will do whatever event the team needs her to do, and is always supportive to her teammates.”

Aniella Opalacz, Mercy

Active in the Mercy high school community, Aniella is a member of the indoor track squad after playing three years of basketball. A top student with a class rank of 12 and a 3.89 grade point average, Aniella won the Bryan College Book Award and is a member of the National Honor Society. Aniella serves as Vice President of the Mercy student body and founded the Health Literacy Club. Mercy indoor track coach John Hastings said, “Aniella has overcome a serious knee injury to become a skilled hurdler whose best times are still ahead of her. She works extremely hard to be a great competitor and teammate.”

Patrick White, Fairfield Prep

One of the top swimmers in the SCC, Patrick White is a top student who holds a 3.79 grade point average. An All-SCC and All-State performer in four freestyle events, Patrick helped the Jesuits capture the SCC title in each of the last three years. Fairfield Prep boys swimming coach Bruce Jaffe said, “Patrick is an outstanding student and captain of the swimming and diving squad. He’s been a positive leader in and out of the pool.”

Julian Campoli, Fairfield Prep

The captain of the Jesuits' wrestling team, Julian has been an exemplary student-athlete. He sports a 3.8 grade point average and is a member of the National Honor Society. Julian will attend the University of Scranton on a four-year Army ROTC scholarship. Fairfield Prep wrestling coach David Judd said, "Julian is a quality young man who exhibits leadership in the classroom and in the athletic arena."

Stephen Poppa, Derby

The captain of the Red Raiders' wrestling squad, Stephen is a top student ranking fifth in his class with an impressive 3.89 grade point average. A CAPT Scholar, Stephen is a member of the National Honor Society and recently received the Yale Book Award. Derby wrestling coach Buster Jadach said, "Stephen has been successful in many areas – as a student, an athlete and community leader."

Christopher Mastrianni, Derby

At three-sport captain (football, wrestling and baseball) for the Red Raiders, Christopher has also done extremely well in the classroom. Ranked eighth in his class, Christopher sports a 3.79 grade point average and is a member of the National and Spanish honor societies. Derby wrestling coach Buster Jadach said, "Christopher has proven to be a model leader academically, socially and athletically at Derby High School."

Chantell Alford, Wilbur Cross

A key member of the Governors' girls basketball squad, Chantell has excelled in the classroom with a high class rank (10th). An All-Oronoque selection last season on the basketball court, Chantell volunteers her time with the National Youth Sports Program. Wilbur Cross girls basketball coach Michelle Cabaldon said, "Chantell deserves this honor because of her hard work and dedication to being a top student-athlete. She is a wonderful role model for our young athletes."

Elvin Rodriguez, Wilbur Cross

A two-sport (basketball and baseball) standout for the Governors, Elvin Rodriguez has been a top student-athlete during his high school career. A key member of the highly-successful Wilbur Cross boys basketball (currently ranked first in the state of Connecticut), Elvin earned All-Oronoque honors on the baseball diamond in 2007. Elvin ranks in the top 15 percent of his class with a 3.5 grade point average. Wilbur Cross athletic director Jake Jarvis said, "Elvin is a leader in the entire Wilbur Cross school community and has achieved success in and out of the classroom."

Brian Roach, Jonathan Law

A two-sport (football and basketball) standout for the Lawmen, Brian Roach has been an honor roll student during his high school career. A Third Team *New Haven Register* All-Area football honoree, Brian was a key part of Law's first-ever SCC Division II West championship. He serves as the captain of the basketball team and is one of the team's top scorers and rebounders. Jonathan Law boys basketball coach Tom Blake, "Brian is fine student-athlete who has achieved success in both the classroom and on the athletic fields."

Becca Sheilds, Jonathan Law

A standout student-athlete, Becca Sheilds sports a grade point average over 4.0 and serves as the captain of the girls basketball squad. A double-figure scorer, Becca has been one of the most versatile players on the team. Jonathan Law girls basketball coach Mike Hoggatt said, "Becca is a leader on and off the court. A notable student in the classroom, she is even more valuable on the court doing a little bit of everything for the team."

Rebecca Bocco, West Haven

A two-sport (swimming and tennis) performer for the Blue Devils, Rebecca Bocco ranks 21st in her class with an impressive 3.57 grade point average. A member of the National Honor Society, Rebecca is also a school record holder as a member of the 200 medley and freestyle relay teams. West Haven swimming coach Dave Tremblay said, "Rebecca is an excellent choice for this honor. She is one of West Haven's most outstanding swimmers, and has exceeded taking many demanding academic courses."

Tommy Marchitto, West Haven

A two-sport (ice hockey and lacrosse) athlete, Tommy has been impressive in the classroom. He sports a 3.32 grade point average and ranks in the top 15 percent of his class. Tommy was the school's finalist for the Wendy's Heisman Athletic Award. West Haven ice hockey coach Joe Morell said, "An important part of our team, Tommy has been a leader on and off the ice."

Tim Fekete, Lyman Hall

A four-year member of the Trojans' indoor and outdoor track squads, Tim Fekete ranks first in his class with an imposing 4.11 grade point average. A National Merit Scholar and AP Scholar of Distinction, Tim is a member of the National Honor Society and has served as President of his class for four years. Tim is also captain of both track squads in 2007-08. Lyman Hall indoor track coach Jason Zettergren said, "Tim is an exceptional leader both in and out of the classroom, representing Lyman Hall athletics as a model scholar athlete."

Sheila Reagan, Lyman Hall

A three-sport (soccer, indoor and outdoor track) athlete, Sheila Reagan has been a top student-athlete at Lyman Hall. Ranked 11th in her class with a 3.88 grade point average, Sheila is a member of the National Honor Society and an AP Scholar with Distinction. Active in the school and local community, Sheila will attend Colgate University and major in biology. Lyman Hall girls indoor track coach Will Vincent said, "One of the top shot putters in the state, Sheila works extremely hard and is a team leader who is trustworthy, reliable and genuine."

Brendan Andrew, Daniel Hand

The captain of the Tigers' wrestling team, Brendan Andrew ranks the first decile of his class with a 3.87 grade point average. A member of the National Honor Society, Brendan is a part of Hand's premier choral group, Weas Haeil. On the wrestling mat, he finished fourth in the 2007 Class L tournament in the 152-pound weight class. Hand wrestling coach Dave D'Alessio said, "Brendan deserves this award for his exceptional leadership and performance, while maintaining a number of activities and a demanding academic schedule."

Kate Clawson, Daniel Hand

A four-year varsity member of the Tigers' girls basketball team, Kate Clawson ranks in the sixth decile with a 3.18 grade point average. Extremely active in the Hand community, Kate is a member of the school's premier choral group, Weas Haeil, and has coordinated several fund-raising activities for worthy causes. Hand girls basketball coach Jim Holleran said, "Kate is a very solid student, and is the epitome of a team player, always looking for teammates and making them better players with her passing ability."

The SportsCenter of Connecticut offers an exciting and unique combination of fun, recreation, lessons and competitive exercise! Located at 784 River Road (Route 110) in Shelton, the Sports Center of Connecticut offers and a premier weather-protected golf practice facility, 18-hole miniature golf course, baseball & softball batting stadium, lazer tag arena, fun bowl and the world's only double-decker ice arena. For more information, visit www.sportscenterct.com.

Founded in 1994, the Southern Connecticut Conference is in its 14th season of competition in 2007-08 with 23 member-schools and nearly 23,000 students. Recognized as the premier athletic league in the state of Connecticut, SCC member schools have captured over 250 state championships since the league's inception. More importantly, the SCC is recognized for its outstanding non-athletic programs and events, which attempt to break down barriers and build bridges of understanding to its students. For more information on the SCC, visit www.SouthernConnecticutConference.org.