NESCAC Baseball All-Conference Teams Announced

Tufts’ Falkson Selected as Player of the Year

HADLEY, Mass. – Tufts junior Nick Falkson (Dedham, Mass.) is the NESCAC Player of the Year as voted by the league’s coaches. He is hitting .377 overall to lead the Jumbos and raised his average to .400 in conference play. He ranks second in the league in hits (55), third in RBI (37) and owns an on-base percentage of .461. Defensively, he has made just one error in 298 total chances in the infield. Falkson is the third Jumbo in program history to receive the award, joining Dan Callahan (2001) and Steve Ragonese (2008). He helped Tufts win the NESCAC title for the second straight year and was also named to the All-NESCAC First Team for the first time in his career.

First Team
IF Kellen Hatheway ! Williams So. Armonk, N.Y.
OF Oscar Kutch Tufts Sr. Houston, Texas
IF Tommy O’Hara %&# Tufts Jr. Glenview, Ill.
C Alex Rodriguez Trinity Fy. South Windsor, Conn.
OF Yanni Thanopoulos # Amherst Sr. Highland, Calif.

Second Team
OF Ryder Arsenault Colby Sr. New Hampton, N.H.
IF Chris Collins Hamilton Sr. Weston, Conn.
UT Nick DiBenedetto Trinity Sr. Fort Myers, Fla.
IF Jason Lock Middlebury Sr. Foster City, Calif.
C Nick Miceli % Wesleyan Sr. West Hartford, Conn.
P Ethan Rhode Wesleyan Sr. Doylestown, Pa.
IF Will Shackelford Tufts So. Orleans, Mass.
OF Anthony Spina $ Amherst Sr. Brooklyn, N.Y.
P Jackson Volle % Amherst Sr. San Diego, Calif.
OF Ryan Wolfsberg % Hamilton Sr. Lincoln, Mass.

Player of the Year: Nick Falkson, Tufts
Pitcher of the Year: Speros Varinos, Tufts
Defensive Player of the Year: Kellen Hatheway, Williams
Co-Rookies of the Year: Alex Rodriguez, Trinity & John Lamont, Williams
Coach of the Year: John Casey, Tufts
Speros Varinos of Tufts was voted as the NESCAC Pitcher of the Year for the second straight season. The senior leads the league with 78 strikeouts in 70.1 innings on the mound, while posting the second-lowest ERA (1.92) in the conference. He carries a 8-1 record into the NCAA Tournament. Varinos becomes the third pitcher to repeat as Pitcher of the Year in conference history and is the fourth Jumbo pitcher to be named NESCAC Pitcher of the Year, joining Kyle Slinger (2014), Ed Bernstein (2011) and Jon Lee (2001, 2003).

Williams sophomore Kellen Hatheway was named the NESCAC Defensive Player of the Year and was also an All-NESCAC First Team selection. The infielder posted a .936 fielding percentage and made just nine errors in 140 total chances this season for the Ephs. At the plate, he hit .362 with a team-high 42 hits, including 12 doubles which tied for second among the league leaders. He also led Williams in runs (38) and drove in 25 runs. Hatheway is the first Eph to earn the NESCAC Defensive Player of the Year honor.

Fifteen players were recognized on the all-conference squad for the first time in their collegiate careers. Two players were repeat First Team honorees.

Tufts paced all teams with five all-conference selections, while Amherst was represented by four players and Middlebury and Williams collected three All-NESCAC picks each.

Tufts senior Oscar Kutch landed on the First Team for the first time in his career. The outfielder ranks sixth in the conference in hits (45), including 12 doubles, which is tied for second in the league. He is hitting .324 for the Jumbos and ranks second in the NESCAC in runs scored (41) heading into NCAA Tournament action.

Bowdoin sophomore Brandon Lopez earns his first All-NESCAC accolade with a spot on the First Team. Lopez, a pitcher and utility player, posted a 2.62 ERA with 26 strikeouts and a 4-1 record in 44.2 innings of work on the mound for the Polar Bears. At the plate, Lopez ranked second on the team in hitting (.333) and slugged .473. He recorded 31 hits with 15 RBIs and 15 runs.

Tufts junior Tommy O’Hara is a three-time First Team honoree. The 2015 NESCAC Rookie of the Year paces the league with 44 RBIs and 42 runs scored, and is tied for second with four home runs. He has a .344 batting average, a .497 on-base percentage and a .531 slugging percentage heading into NCAA Regional play.

Senior Ryan Rizzo of Middlebury helped the Panthers manufacture an impressive turnaround from last season. Rizzo was a key contributor to Middlebury’s run to finish first in the West Division and as NESCAC Runner-Up. He ranked ninth in the league in hits (43) with a .301 average. He was a threat on the base paths, finishing the year with 20 stolen bases which is second in the conference.

Junior Harry Roberson and senior Yanni Thanaopoulos represent Amherst on the First Team. Roberson moves from the Second Team last season to the First Team this year for his second All-NESCAC accolade. He posted a .359 batting average and slugged .538 to rank among the top-10 hitters in the conference. He is third in the league in hits (52), including 12 doubles, and runs (40). Thanaopoulos is a repeat First Team selection for the Mammoths. He leads the NESCAC in hitting with a .417 average and is slugging .535. He recorded 60 hits, including 14 doubles, to lead the conference and drove in 41 runs.

First-years John Lamont of Williams and Alex Rodriguez of Trinity were selected as the NESCAC Co-Rookies of the Year this season and both were named to the All-NESCAC First Team. Lamont, a pitcher, is the sixth Eph to receive the award, joining Kellen Hatheway (2016), Robin Allemand (2007), Dan Benz (2006), Chris Bodnar (2002) and Jabe Bergeron (2001). Rodriguez is the third Bantam to garner the honor, joining Sean Meekins (2012) and Kent Graham (2007). Lamont posted a league-leading 1.80 ERA in his first season for the Ephs. He won four games and picked up 37 strikeouts in 40 innings of work. Rodriguez batted .342 and slugged .465 for Trinity. He registered 39 hits, including three triples, while driving in 23 RBIs.

John Casey of Tufts was selected by his peers as the NESCAC Coach of the Year for the second straight year and third time in his 34-year career, having also garnered the accolade in 2010. Casey guided Tufts to its second straight NESCAC Championship after posting a 9-3 record in the NESCAC East Division. The Jumbos, who were just the second team in the 17-year history of the NESCAC Championship to sweep a pair of games on Sunday to win the title, enter the NCAA Regionals with a 30-8-1 record.