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MEN'S LACROSSE All-Conference - May 5, 2011

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

MEN'S LACROSSE ALL-CONFERENCE SELECTIONS RELEASED

Tufts' Hessler Repeats as NESCAC Player of the Year

HADLEY, Mass. – For the second consecutive spring, Tufts' DJ Hessler (Monkton, Md.) has been chosen by the conference coaches as the NESCAC Player of the Year. The senior attacker has been a significant part of arguably the best period in program history for the Jumbos, as his squad won its first-ever NESCAC title along with the school's first NCAA crown in any sport last spring. Hessler will join his teammates in pursuing a second-straight league title this weekend at home.

The Jumbos' annual scoring leader in each of his four years, Hessler is closing in on 300 career points as he has amassed 133 goals and 164 assists for 297 points. The senior attacker has left his mark on the Jumbos' record book, as he not only set the career points mark at Tufts this spring but also holds the top two single-season records for assists and points along with the career record for helpers. Hessler needs just 15 more goals to add the Tufts career goals record to his list of accolades. This season, Hessler leads the NESCAC in scoring for the third time with 31 goals and 40 assists for 71 points through 15 games, an average of 4.73 per game. Joining former Tufts great Bryan Griffin as the only two Jumbos to earn the conference's top honor in back-to-back years, Hessler also completed a rare feat by being named All-NESCAC for the fourth time, as he was recognized on the First Team for the third consecutive year. Hessler is also the only Division III player up for the Tewaarton Award, given annually to the nation's top collegiate lacrosse player.

At attack along with Hessler on the All-Conference First Team were junior teammate Sean Kirwan (Boonton Township, N.J.) and Middlebury senior David Hild (West Hartford, Conn.). Kirwan is the NESCAC's top goal-scorer, as he paces the league-leading Jumbo offense with a career-best 52 goals. Two more goals this weekend will give him the most in a single-season in program history. Hild, who moved up from the 2010 Second Team, is tied for second with Kirwan for points with 53 on 39 goals and 14 assists. Sitting atop the Panthers' score sheet for the second-straight spring, Hild needs two more tallies to tie his career-high of 41 from his junior campaign.

Making his third consecutive appearance on the First Team was senior Owen Smith (Brunswick, Maine) of Bowdoin. Smith has helped his red-hot Polar Bear squad win their last five games, including a 14-9 victory at Amherst in the NESCAC quarterfinals that put Bowdoin back in the semifinals for the fifth time in six years. Smith, a member of the Polar Bears' NESCAC champion men's ice hockey team, has seen action in 12 games with 20 goals, nine assists, and 23 ground balls. Joining Smith at midfield were the Tufts tandem of senior Matt Witko (Chappaqua, N.Y.) and junior Kevin McCormick (Laytonsville, Md.) along with Middlebury senior Andrew Conner (Alexandria, Va.). An All-NESCAC First Team selection last spring, Witko has collected 22 goals and 11 assists for 33 points, fifth among his teammates, while McCormick, a first-time honoree, is fourth with 38 on 30 goals and eight assists. Conner, also a first-time All-NESCAC selection, has racked up a career-high 31 goals and 36 points, good enough for third among his fellow Panthers.

The defensive unit on the All-Conference First Team was comprised of Trinity senior Teddy Bascom (Sudbury, Mass.), Connecticut College junior Clay Hillyer (South Windsor, Conn.), and Middlebury's Matt Rayner (Andover, Mass.), who earned First Team accolades for the second time in as many years. An excellent take-away defender, Bascom has helped lead a Bantam defensive unit that has averaged 8.09 goals against per game this season while ranking second for Trinity in ground balls with 37. He was previously a member of the 2010 Second Team. Hillyer always drew the Camels' toughest defensive assignments. He scooped 31 grounders and earned his first career point, an assist, in 2011. The Panthers' playmaker in the defensive end, Rayner, a junior, was fifth for Middlebury in ground balls with 33.

Colby senior face-off specialist Craig Bunker (Topsfield, Mass.) completed a remarkable career with his third consecutive appointment to the All-NESCAC First Team. Atop the conference stats in face-off wins once again, Bunker won .714 of the face-offs he took (205-287) and also scooped up a conference-best 123 ground balls. He finished his prolific four-year career with a .657 win rate, winning nearly 70 percent of face-offs over the last three seasons. Senior Alec Bialosky (Moreland Hills, Ohio) of Tufts returned to the First Team at long-stick midfielder, as the Jumbos landed five representatives on the 13-member squad. A big part of the Jumbos' transition offense, Bialosky was second for Tufts in grounders with 57. He also had a career-high 10 goals and six assists.

Rounding out the 2011 NESCAC All-Conference First Team was Trinity junior goalkeeper Peter Johnson (Riverside, Conn.). Playing nearly every minute of every game, Johnson has backboned the Bantams this season with a 7.73 goals against average and a .616 save percentage for a 12-3 record.

Rookie of the Year honors went to Amherst's Devin Acton (Sudbury, Mass.). Acton, who also earned a spot on the Second Team, led the Lord Jeffs in scoring and was seventh among all conference players with 47 points on 34 goals, six in man-up situations, and 13 assists. He also scooped up 22 ground balls.

Trinity first year head coach Michael Higgins was chosen by his counterparts as the NESCAC Coach of the Year. The former defensive coordinator at Tufts, Higgins has guided the Bantams to a 12-3 overall record and a 6-3 conference mark this season along with the program's first-ever appearance in the NESCAC semifinals.

2011 NESCAC MEN'S LACROSSE ALL-CONFERENCE

First Team

A	DJ Hessler *	Tufts
A	David Hild ^	Middlebury
A	Sean Kirwan	Tufts
M	Andrew Conner	Middlebury
M	Kevin McCormick	Tufts
M	Owen Smith *	Bowdoin
M	Matt Witko *	Tufts
LSM	Alec Bialosky *	Tufts
SP	Craig Bunker *	Colby
D	Teddy Bascom ^	Trinity
D	Clay Hillyer	Connecticut College
D	Matt Rayner *	Middlebury
GK	Peter Johnson	Trinity

Second Team

A	Devin Acton	Amherst	Fr.	Sudbury, Mass.
A	Ryan Molloy	Tufts	Sr.	Setauket, N.Y.
A	Evan Redwood *	Amherst	Jr.	Lutherville, Md.
M	Ian Deveau	Colby	So.	Portsmouth, R.I.
M	Alex Fox ^	Amherst	Jr.	Garden City, N.Y.
M	Mark Mangano	Connecticut College	Sr.	Basking Ridge, N.J.
LSM	Gabe Kelley	Wesleyan	Sr.	Bethesda, Md.
SP	Chuck Czerkowski	Connecticut College	Jr.	Cohasset, Mass.
SP	Corey Jacobs ^	Williams	Sr.	Somers, Conn.
D	Matthew Egan	Bowdoin	Jr.	Newton, Mass.
D	Kevin Helm	Bates	Jr.	Norwell, Mass.
D	Mike Robinson	Wesleyan	So.	Ridgewood, N.J.
GK	Ryan Deane	Middlebury	Sr.	Grosse Pointe, Mich.

Player of the Year: DJ Hessler, Tufts

Rookie of the Year: Devin Acton, Amherst

Coach of the Year: Michael Higgins, Trinity

* - 2010 All-Conference First Team ^ - 2010 All-Conference Second Team

AMHERST · BATES · BOWDOIN · COLBY · CONNECTICUT COLLEGE · HAMILTON · MIDDLEBURY · TRINITY · TUFTS · WESLEYAN · WILLIAMS