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WOMEN'S BASKETBALL All-Conference - March 2, 2011

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

WOMEN'S BASKETBALL ALL-CONFERENCE SELECTIONS ANNOUNCED

Daigneault of Amherst Scores Player of the Year

HADLEY, Mass. – Senior forward Jaci Daigneault (Guilford, Conn.) of Amherst has been named the NESCAC Player of the Year, as determined by the conference coaches. Daigneault helped the Lord Jeffs win the 2011 NESCAC Women's Basketball Championship this past weekend, the program's third league title in the past four seasons. It's the second year in a row that an Amherst player has earned the conference's top honor, after teammate Caroline Stedman became the first Jeff to ever win the award last winter.

After battling through injury during her junior year, Daigneault has turned in her finest season on the court in her final campaign with the Jeffs. The senior forward is among the league leaders in both points and rebounds with a team-best and career-high 15.0 points and 7.2 rebounds per game while also grabbing 2.1 steals heading into this weekend's NCAA Tournament action. She broke her personal record for points in a game with 24 on 11-of-14 shooting during a victory at Farmingdale St. on Jan. 20. Daigneault has had the hot hand for Amherst all season long, as she has made an impressive .618 percent of her shots - a figure that puts her fourth nationally. In addition to being named Player of the Year, Daigneault also garnered All-NESCAC First Team honors for the second time during her tenure with the Jeffs (2009).

Returning to the All-Conference First Team for a third consecutive year was Tufts guard Colleen Hart (Needham, Mass.), one of five seniors representing five different squads on this year's First Team. Although a late season injury limited Hart to just 18 games, she still managed to lead the NESCAC in both points (16.0) and minutes played (34.1) per game for the second-straight year while also recording a league-leading assist-to-turnover ratio of 2.61. Hart had one of the most magnificent careers in program history and walks away from Tufts a four-time All-NESCAC honoree. The 2008 NESCAC Rookie of the Year became the Jumbos' all-time leading scorer this winter, accumulating 1,422 points for an average of nearly 14 points per game. Hart also owns the single-season and career records for three-pointers at Tufts after she drained 72 treys during the 2009-10 season and finished with 231.

Moving up from the 2010 Second Team to the 2011 First Team was senior forward Chessie Jackson (Goleta, Calif.) of Williams. A consistent scorer who has averaged in double figures over four years with the Ephs, Jackson paces her squad's offense for the second consecutive season with 11.5 points per game. Jackson dropped a career-high 31 points on 12-of-17 shooting in a victory over Wesleyan on Jan. 22. She has also chipped in 5.9 rebounds and 2.9 assists per game for Williams, which will compete in the NCAA Tournament for the second year in a row.

Rounding out the All-Conference First Team were representatives from two Maine teams, Bowdoin guard Katie Bergeron (Bradley, Maine) and Colby forward Jules Kowalski (Montville, N.J.). Bergeron ranks fifth among all conference players in scoring, as her career-high 12.3 points per game leads the Polar Bears for the second time in the last three years. During the semifinals of the 2011 NESCAC Women's Basketball Championship, Bergeron set a tournament record with a personal-best 29 points in a 79-63 win over Colby. Kowalski has had a career year of her own with the Mules, sitting second among her teammates in scoring and rebounding with 12.2 points and 7.9 boards per game. Kowalski's shooting percentage of .523 is good enough for third in the NESCAC.

Tufts senior guard Vanessa Miller (Cincinnati, Ohio) repeated as the conference's Defensive Player of the Year. Always assigned to an opponent's best perimeter player, the quick Miller helped the Jumbos hold foes to an average 50.4 points per game, second among NESCAC teams. Miller used her last semester of eligibility during the second half of this season and grabbed 5.4 rebounds and 2.8 steals per game over 17 outings. She also enjoyed a greater role in the Tufts offense with a career-best scoring average of 7.5 points and had her first career double-double in a win at Emmanuel on Jan. 25, collecting 17 points and 10 rebounds.

Rookie of the Year went to Bates first year guard Meredith Kelly (Cohasset, Mass.). Kelly provided a spark off the bench for the Bobcat offense, contributing 7.6 points per game and hitting .476 percent of her shots while appearing in all 25 outings. Both figures were tops among first year players.

For the third time in the past four years, Amherst head coach G.P. Gromacki was chosen as the NESCAC Coach of the Year. The fourth year head coach shared the honor in 2008 before winning it outright in 2010. The Lord Jeffs ran through the conference slate unbeaten for the second year in a row and won their third NESCAC title this past weekend. Since joining the Amherst staff, Gromacki's team has posted a record of 114-9.

2010-11 NESCAC WOMEN'S BASKETBALL ALL-CONFERENCE

First Team

G	Katie Bergeron	Bowdoin	Sr.	Bradley, Maine
G	Colleen Hart *	Tufts	Sr.	Needham, Mass.
F	Jaci Daigneault	Amherst	Sr.	Guilford, Conn.
F	Chessie Jackson ^	Williams	Sr.	Goleta, Calif.
F	Jules Kowalski	Colby	Sr.	Montville, N.J.

Second Team

G	Jill Henriksen	Bowdoin	Jr.	Bath, Maine
G	Caroline Stedman *	Amherst	Jr.	Walpole, Mass.
G/F	Claire Baecher	Williams	So.	Brunswick, Maine
F	Rachael Mack	Colby	Jr.	Augusta, Maine
F	Taylor Shea	Williams	Sr.	Allendale, N.J.
C	Sarah Leyman ^	Amherst	Sr.	Cincinnati, Ohio

Player of the Year: Jaci Daigneault, Amherst

Defensive Player of the Year: Vanessa Miller, Tufts

Rookie of the Year: Meredith Kelly, Bates

Coach of the Year: G.P. Gromacki, Amherst

* - 2009-10 All-Conference First Team; ^ - 2009-10 All-Conference Second Team