



Men's Soccer in AE Championship Finals

The University of Hartford men's soccer team rebounded from a 1-5 start and hit a hot streak at just the right time, reaching the America East Championship for the first time since 1999. The team's 2011 campaign ended with an 8-9-4 record after the Hawks won five games in a row—three to end the regular season followed by conference tournament wins over UMBC, the defending America East champions, and top-seeded Boston University. The Hawks came up short in the finals against second-seeded Stony Brook, falling 4-2.

Four Hawks received postseason honors. David Bernhardsson, a sophomore transfer, was placed on the America East All-Conference First Team, while senior midfielder Patrick Boucher garnered Second Team honors. Atobra Ampadu and Connor Yeany were named to the 2011 America East All-Rookie Team.

"It's a big step for the program to get to the finals," said first-year head coach Tom Poitras following the semifinal win at BU. "We went into Baltimore and played against the defending champs and ended up on the positive side of that. Then on to Boston to face the regular season champs, and our guys worked really hard, got a great goal, and defended really well after that." ■

Sophomore forward Anthony Santaga outpositions an opponent in the game against Albany.

A Sublime Season of Women's Soccer



Junior forward Amélia Pereira scored the second point in the Hawks 3-0 win over UMBC.

On the heels of the men's lacrosse team's first trip to the NCAA Championship last spring, it looked as if the women's soccer program might make its first trip to the Big Dance since 2006. The Hawks enjoyed one of their best seasons ever this fall, carrying an undefeated record of 13-0-3 into the regular season finale against Boston University (BU). Their amazing record also put them among the final six undefeated teams in America.

Hartford's impressive record led to five straight weeks of being ranked among the top 10 schools in the Northeast, according to rankings issued by the National Soccer Coaches Association of America. The Hawks moved up to as high as fourth in that poll

before losing at BU to conclude the regular season. A subsequent 1-0 setback to Albany in the America East Conference Tournament ended the team's quest for a conference crown. But its 13-2-3 final record ties for the fewest losses in a season since women's soccer debuted at the University in 1984.

Sophomore goalkeeper Erin Quinlan backed a stellar Hawks defense that recorded 12 shutouts during the season. Quinlan, who played all but 39 minutes in net, was among the nation's top five in both save percentage and goals-against average. She was honored as America East Goalkeeper of the Year.

Quinlan was one of five Hawks named to the All-Conference First Team. Joining her were fifth-year senior Mary Beth Hamilton and junior Amélia Pereira as forwards, junior midfielder Caitlin Alves, and senior defender Michele DeSanti. Midfielder Chanel Johnson was an All-Rookie Team honoree.

Alves, the America East Fan's Choice Player of the Year, closed out the regular season leading the Hawks and the America East in both points (25) and goals scored (10).

Head coach John Natale, who served as an advance scout for the U.S. National Team during last summer's World Cup competition, and his assistants, Kelly Shimmin and Kevin



Junior guard Daphne Elliott in the quarterfinal game against Long Island University.

WNIT Women's Basketball Faces Second-Ranked Notre Dame

The Hawks started off their preseason with a 64-45 win over the Manhattan College Jaspers in the opening round of the WNIT on Nov. 11. The team advanced to the Elite Eight, defeating the Long Island Blackbirds 54-45 in the quarterfinals on Nov. 13. In the semifinals on Nov. 17, hosted by Notre Dame, the Hawks fell to the Fighting Irish 98-43.

Bacher, were named Coaching Staff of the Year by their peers.

"It's been a while since we've been in this position (battling for the conference title on the last day of the season), so I think the season has been a great learning experience," Natale says. "The majority of the team is back next year, so we'll start planning, add a couple of pieces to the team, and be ready to take the next step." ■