WOMEN’S SOCCER WINS REGULAR-SEASON TITLE
Sophomore Aaliyah Ingram tallied her second game-winning goal of the season four minutes into extra time to lift the University of Hartford Women’s Soccer team to a 2-1 victory over the Vermont Catamounts on the final day of the regular season, Oct. 26. Just minutes after the Hawks defeated Vermont, the Binghamton Bearcats scored a second overtime goal to knock off UMBC in Baltimore, giving UHart the outright America East regular-season championship, its first since 2006.

The Hawks finished the season 10-4-5, dropping a 2-1 decision to the University of New Hampshire in the America East tournament title game. It marked the fourth-straight year of double-digit wins for the program.

Senior Chanel Johnson was named the America East Striker of the Year for the second-straight season, one of five Hawks to be honored with conference accolades. Johnson was the league’s top scorer with a career-high 25 points on 11 goals and three assists. She was one of three players named First Team All-Conference, joining junior forward Sidney Spremullo and junior defender Emma Donnelly. Donnelly, also named to the All-Academic Team for the second-straight season, is a biomedical engineering major with a 3.92 GPA in the University of Hartford’s College of Engineering, Technology, and Architecture.

Junior Kristen McAdams was named to the All-Conference Second Team, while freshman Melina Spanos was an All-Rookie Team honoree. Head coach John Natale and his staff—Kelly Shimmin, Ciara Crinion, Matt Mones, and Kevin Bacher—were named the America East Coaching Staff of the Year.

MEN’S SOCCER UNDEFEATED AT HOME
The University of Hartford Men’s Soccer team won six of its final seven games, compiling double-digit wins in back-to-back campaigns for the first time in 15 years (1998-99). The Hawks, who finished the season with an 11-6-2 record, fell, 2-1, at UMBC in the America East championship game.

UHart clearly enjoyed the comforts of home, Alumni Stadium at Al-Marzook Field, where the team had an unblemished 8-0-0 record. Highlighted by a trio of first-team selections, the most in a single season in 18 years, eight different Hawks were named to America East All-Conference squads. Junior Jhamie Hyde and senior Rohan Roye took home the first league honors of their careers, joining junior Javoni Simms, a three-time honoree, on the conference’s first team.

Midfielder Udi Cohen and goalkeeper David MacKinnon were All-Conference Second Team selection, while Andre Morrison was named to the All-Rookie Team. In addition, the Hawks proudly placed a quartet of student-athletes on the America East All-Academic Team—juniors Blake Jones and Anthony LoBello earned the distinction for the second-straight year; MacKinnon and senior Connor Yeaney were first-time honorees.

VOLLEYBALL RECORDS MOST WINS IN TWO DECADES
The University of Hartford Volleyball team recorded its highest win total in 20 years, posting a 17-13 overall record. Senior outside hitter Sareeta Nethersole finished with 22 double-doubles (10 or more kills and 10 or more digs per game) on the season, and senior Kathryn Gawrych’s .267 hitting percentage marked the second-best single-season hitting percentage in program history. Freshman Katy Henchy finished the season with 71 block assists, also second best for an individual season.

A highlight of the year was a thrilling five-set win over Binghamton in the home finale on Senior Day, Nov. 9. “The biggest stat tonight,” said excited third-year head coach Alex Temkin after the match, “was our attendance (534). We were rocking this place, and it was an all-around effort from everyone, including our fans.”
As if golfing itself isn’t enough of a challenge, University of Hartford men’s golfer Evan Russell ’16 has some added pressure halfway through his collegiate career. It would be quite an understatement to say that he had impressive freshman and sophomore years on the links, so the junior from Grantham, N.H., set the bar high for this year.

This past summer, Russell was featured in Sports Illustrated’s “Faces in the Crowd” section after winning his second-straight Vermont Amateur Championship. He trailed by four shots with just two holes to play in the final round, yet somehow managed to force a playoff with a pair of birdies before winning the title after five grueling playoff holes. Russell’s victory made him just the ninth back-to-back champion in the 108-year history of the Vermont Amateur.

“I was down by four shots when I went to the 17th tee box, and I thought I was playing for second place,” says Russell. “Somehow, by the time I got to the 18th green, I had a putt to win.”

Russell’s win in the Vermont Amateur followed a sophomore season at UHart in which he posted top-10 finishes in all 11 team events and qualified, as an individual, for the NCAA Regional in Raleigh, N.C., where he finished tied for 29th. Overall for the season, he posted a single-season record for stroke average, carding a 70.56 average over 34 rounds, besting his previous school record of 73.06 from his freshman season. Russell earned two individual medalist honors and three runner-up finishes.

Named both New England Division I and America Sky Men’s Golf Conference Player of the Year last spring, Russell was selected to the PING All-Northeast Region Team by the Golf Coaches’ Association of America. He finished the season with a national statistical ranking of 18, according to Golfstat’s analysis of Division I golfers.

Pete Stankevich, the head men’s golf coach at the University of Hartford since 2008, recruited Russell after seeing him play on just two occasions—at the U.S. Junior Amateur Championships at Trump National Golf Club in Bedminster, N.J., and at the World Series of Junior Golf in Providence, R.I.

“I had some other schools looking at me, but at that time, I was just a very average putter,” says Russell. “I think that held me back and scared some schools away.”

Russell chose UHart, where he could major in business management in the University’s Barney School of Business. He immediately made an impact during his freshman season. He was the team’s best golfer in a year that the Hawks enjoyed one of the most successful seasons in recent memory. Russell was named the America Sky Men’s Golf Conference Newcomer of the Year and was also a First Team All-Conference selection.

Despite his success, Russell downplays his accomplishments and instead points to the flaws in his game. He used his driver to birdie each of the final two holes of regulation and force the playoff in the Vermont Amateur, yet he says he still has to sharpen that part of his game. Russell makes it clear that he doesn’t think he’s playing his best golf right now.

“I’d like to get my game back to where it was before,” he says. “It’s not where it was last year, when I won a few times and played well. I’d love to do that again.”

While he did defend his individual title at the Hartford Hawks Invitational in September, Russell otherwise did not enjoy the same amazing success this past fall. Still, he had plenty of support from his teammates as the Hawks finished first or second in five of the six tournaments in which they competed. And the stage is set for a magical spring, one that Russell hopes will lead not just him individually, but the entire Hawks team, to the NCAA Tournament.

“At last year’s NCAA Regional in Raleigh, I played okay,” Russell says, “but it was a little different because it was just me and Coach Stankevich. I’d like to go back with a few more of my teammates.”