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EMPIRE 8 ANNOUNCES WOMEN'S BASKETBALL ALL-CONFERENCE TEAM
Ava Thomas of Utica Named Empire 8 Player of the Year

ROCHESTER, NY – Senior forward/center Ava Thomas of Utica College was named the Empire 8 Women's Basketball Player of the Year. Whitney Smith of Nazareth College earned Rookie of the Year accolades. Deb Buff was selected as Coach of the Year for leading Rochester Institute of Technology to a school-record 15 victories, and its first postseason appearances in the conference and ECAC in school history.

Thomas, a repeat first-team choice, enters ECAC play averaging 15.6 points and 12.4 rebounds per game. She is shooting 49.7 percent from the field and 79.1 percent from the free throw line in addition to leading the Pioneers in blocks (2.4 per game) and steals (3.3 per game). Thomas, who averaged a double-double for the second consecutive year, has led Utica to 18 wins and the fourth seed in the ECAC tournament.

The other repeat first-team selection was senior guard Lindsay Wilson of Hartwick College, who was named to the first team for the third year in a row. She averaged a league-best 21.3 points per game and averaged 5.3 assists and 2.4 steals per game.

Senior guard Mara Tichy of the Hawks joined Wilson on the first team, averaging 14.5 points, 6.7 rebounds, and 2.3 assists per game. She shot 75.2 percent from the free throw line and 44.7 percent from the floor.

Junior forward Erika Steele of conference champion Ithaca College was named to the first team all-conference squad. She is averaging 12.2 points and 8.0 rebounds per game as the Bombers prepare for their sixth NCAA Division III Women's Basketball Championship appearance in the past seven years.

Senior forward Margot Sandy of RIT received first-team recognition for the first time after garnering honorable mention honors last season. She enters ECAC play averaging 14.3 points, 7.7 rebounds per game, and 2.0 blocks, while shooting 40.9 percent from three-point range.

Smith was selected as the top rookie after averaging 12.5 points, 5.0 rebounds, and 2.0 assists per game. She was named Empire 8 Rookie of the Week six times.

2007 Empire 8 Women's Basketball Honors

Player of the Year: Ava Thomas, Utica College

Rookie of the Year: Whitney Smith, Nazareth College

Coach of the Year: Deb Buff, Rochester Institute of Technology

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Empire 8 Women's Basketball All-Conference

First Team

Name	School	Year	Position
Margot Sandy	RIT	Senior	Forward
Erika Steele	Ithaca	Junior	Forward
Mara Tichy	Hartwick	Senior	Guard
Ava Thomas	Utica	Senior	Forward/Center
Lindsay Wilson	Hartwick	Senior	Guard

Second Team

Name	School	Year	Position
Marcia Coakley	Elmira	Sophomore	Guard
Mallory Davis	Utica	Sophomore	Guard
Ramata Diallo	RIT	Senior	Forward
Erin Sanvidge	Ithaca	Senior	Guard
Kourtney Troutman	Elmira	Junior	Guard

Sportswoman of the Year

Name	Yr.	School
Megan Sampsell	Sr.	Alfred University
Tasha Lopez-Pitts	Sr.	Elmira College
Jenny Knight	Sr.	Hartwick College
Erin Sanvidge	Sr.	Ithaca College
Kelly Dunne	Fr.	Nazareth College
Ramata Diallo	Sr.	RIT
Ashley Dean	Jr.	St. John Fisher College
Dana Danzinger	Jr.	Utica College

Honorable Mention

Allison Boehm, St. John Fisher; Bridget Catanese, Elmira; Melanie Jackson, Alfred; Sue Kelly, Ithaca; Whitney Smith, Nazareth.