



## Warriors make waves at LEC swimming championships



Head Coach Sarit Gluz

### Women claim first crown

The Eastern Connecticut State University women's swim team dethroned 16-time defending Little East Conference (LEC) champion Keene State College as the Warriors won their first conference championship at the 22nd Annual LEC Women's Swimming & Diving Championships on Feb. 18.

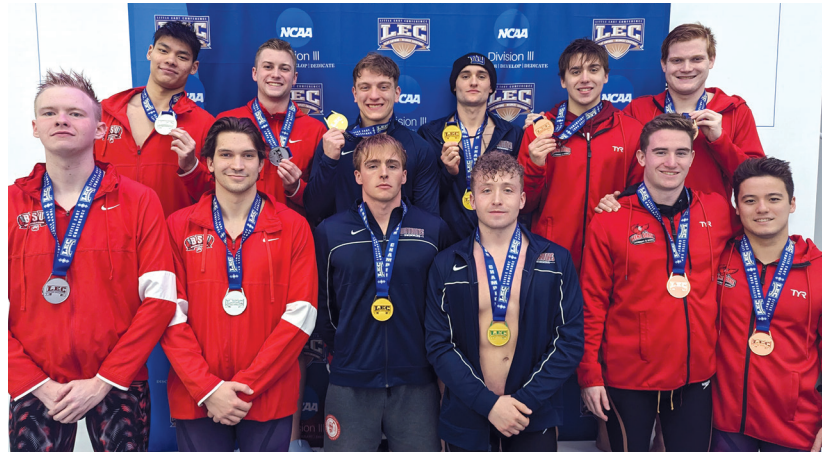
Eastern, which had finished second to Keene State nine consecutive years between 2009 and 2017, totaled 805 points to beat runner-up Bridgewater State University (786) by 19 points. Keene was third with 780 points.

In all, Eastern swimmers were accorded All-LEC honors with top-3 finishes a total of 32 times — 16 in individual events and 16 in relays. Sophomore Natasha Frisch led Eastern with 54 points in her three individual events, while senior Maya Brody and junior Allison Ronan followed closely with 53 points each.

Fifth-year Head Coach Sarit Gluz, who was named Coach-of-the-Year as the men's coach two years ago, was selected as women's Coach-of-the-Year for the first time following the completion of the meet.

### Men surge to second place

Led by four 50-plus scorers and nine record-breaking performances, Eastern finished second at the LEC Men's Swimming & Diving Championships on Feb. 18. Trailing Keene State by seven points after the second day, Eastern outscored the Owls by two points in the final standings, finishing second to Bridgewater State University.



Eastern's 800-yard freestyle relay team (centered in navy) recorded one of the Warriors' five first-place finishes at the Little East Conference championships. Pictured clockwise from top left are Nico Iannucci, Joseph Sylvester, Ben D'Addario and Connor Scully.

In all, Eastern swimmers were accorded All-LEC honors with top-3 finishes a total of 36 times — 16 in individual events and 20 in relays. Junior Joseph Sylvester led Eastern with 56 points, first-year swimmer Nico Iannucci following closely with 54, sophomore Sam Hurlburt adding 52 and junior Connor Rego contributing 51. Those four top scorers, along with junior Ben D'Addario, all earned All-LEC recognition in all three of their individual events.



## Men's golf team makes it three straight titles

For the third time in as many years, Eastern Connecticut State University won the LEC Men's Golf Championship after registering a two-day team total of 590 at the Riverside Golf Course in Portland, ME, in early October. Eastern senior co-captain All-America Ashton Lewis came from behind to earn medalist honors for the third consecutive season. He was tied for fifth with a six-over 76 on the opening day of competition and responded by firing the low round of the championship on the second day with a five-under 65, giving him a two-day score of 141.

Eastern's top four golfers all finished in the Top 10, thus earning All-LEC recognition. With the team victory, Eastern earned the automatic bid awarded to the conference championship team and will compete in the NCAA Division III tournament for the second straight year. The tournament is scheduled for May 14-17 at Boulder Creek (NV) Golf Club.

## Men's soccer recognized for sportsmanship

Eastern is the only reporting men's institution within the United Soccer Coaches (USC) to have earned a Team Ethics and Sportsmanship Award during the 2023 season. A total of 43 programs nationwide qualified for the award, 42 of which were women's programs. Eastern was one of nine New England institutions — all in Division III — to receive an award this past fall.

The award is given to USC members at four levels — platinum, gold, silver, bronze — based on the number of yellow or red cards received. Eastern earned a silver award this year after qualifying for bronze in each of the previous six years, all under 17-year Head Coach Greg DeVito.



## Women's basketball fights breast cancer



"All Warriors, One Fight," was the battle cry of those in attendance at Francis E. Geissler Gymnasium on Jan. 27. Facing conference rival Southern Maine at home has always been special, but this year's contest was extra special, as approximately 30 women who have had or are currently fighting breast cancer were recognized and honored. These women come from local communities including Hartford and Willimantic, with many others being honored in the hearts of all those in attendance. All proceeds were earmarked for the Susan G. Komen fund for breast cancer research.

"This achievement makes me so proud!" said Eastern Director of Athletics Lori Runksmeier. "To be the only men's team in the nation to win this award is amazing, but even more than that, Coach DeVito's ability to build a culture in which this team is regularly recognized for ethics and sportsmanship is extraordinary."

In addition to the Team Ethics and Sportsmanship Award, Eastern has qualified for a USC Team Academic Award 10 times under DeVito, and in back-to-back years won the USC Team Pinnacle Award, which is presented to a program that wins a Team Ethics Award, Team Academic Award and has a minimum season winning percentage of 75%.

## Congratulations Hall of Fame Class of 2023

### Arielle (Cooper) Porter '13

was a softball player who reached base safely in 75 consecutive games and batted .484 in her two final All-America seasons. In a 177-game career as a four-year starting third baseman between 2010-13, Cooper was twice named an All-American — earning first-team recognition

as a senior when she was additionally honored as Eastern College Athletic Conference (ECAC) and LEC

Player-of-the-Year. That year, she became the program's first first-team All-American third baseman and set program season records in batting (.538), slugging (1.076) and on-base (.629) average, hits (71), home runs (16), extra-base hits (34), total bases (142) and runs (61).

### Left-handed pitcher Ryan DiPietro '14

was a national Pitcher-of-the-Year and two-time All-American who helped the Warriors win back-to-back regional baseball championships in a three-year career. The winningest left-handed pitcher in the program's 75-year history, DiPietro was a three-year starter between 2003 and 2005 before being drafted by the Kansas City Royals in the sixth round of the 2005 MLB draft. DiPietro won 29 of 32 decisions and holds the current record by winning 19 straight decisions starting at the midway point of his freshman season in 2003 until the championship game of the 2004 national tournament.

**Kyle Savage '09** was a four-year All-LEC men's lacrosse selection who started all possible 70 matches in goal and backstopped the Warriors to two NCAA tournament appearances between 2006 and 2009. A two-time team captain, he earned first-team honors as a senior in 2009 when the Warriors won the LEC regular



*Eastern's Class of 2023 inductees. From left: Kyle Savage, Karen Sweet, Ryan DiPietro, Arielle (Cooper) Porter, James Schult.*

season title in unbeaten fashion for the third time in four years and went on to their second LEC tournament title in four years.

### James Schult '11

hit and pitched the Warriors to four NCAA Division III baseball tournaments and three LEC regular-season and tournament titles in four years between 2008 and 2011. He led or shared the team lead in 18 hitting and pitching categories as a senior in 2011 when he was named Player-

of-the-Year by both the National College Baseball Writers of America and American Baseball Coaches Association, as well as ECAC and LEC Pitcher-of-the-Year.

**Karen Sweet '98** was a powerful outside hitter and skilled server on four consecutive NCAA Division III tournament-qualifying women's volleyball teams between 1994 and 1997. Sweet was a two-time All-New England selection by the New England Women's Volleyball Association (NEWVA) and senior selection to the 12-person American Volleyball Coaches Association All-New England Region team and to the NEWVA Senior Classic.

### Little East Conference Hall of Fame Inductee

**Molly Rathbun '12** led the LEC in softball pitching wins for four straight years as a four-time All-American and seven-time LEC major award-winner between 2009 and 2012. Rathbun is one of the most decorated softball players in the history of the conference, earning conference Pitcher-of-the-Year honors three times, Player-of-the-Year and Rookie-of-the-Year once and LEC tournament MVP twice. With Rathbun, Eastern qualified for four NCAA tournament berths and won back-to-back regional championships to advance to national tournaments.

