



SPORTS NEWS

Presidents' Athletic Conference

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PAC Members Set to Celebrate Inaugural "NCAA Division III Week" on April 9-15, 2012

NEW WILMINGTON, Pa. – The Presidents' Athletic Conference (PAC) and its member institutions will be active in numerous events and programs to celebrate the inaugural "NCAA Division III Week" on April 9-15, 2012.

Division III Week is a time to observe and celebrate the accomplishments of student-athletes including their academic accomplishments, athletic achievement and campus leadership and community service. In many cases, student-athletes themselves are planning the activities, led by conference and campus student-athlete advisory committees (SAAC).

"After our conference SAAC meetings, it was evident that there was a tremendous amount of interest from our student-athletes to participate in Division III Week," said **Shannon O'Brien**, PAC Associate Director and advisor to the PAC SAAC. "Our student-athletes are excited about this celebration and look to have everyone on their campuses just as excited as they are."

Every member institution and conference has been asked to schedule and publicize at least one activity during the week and acknowledge the event as part of the nationwide Division III Week celebration. The events generally showcase Division III's philosophy, which equally values academics, athletics, and student-athlete involvement in co-curricular and extracurricular activities.

There have been several events planned that will include the Division III partnership with the Special Olympics. Saint Vincent College will be hosting a "Sports Friendship Day" where Special Olympics student-athletes will participate in athletic activities and contests with Saint Vincent student-athletes, as well as sharing a meal with the student-athletes. Geneva College is working with a local Special Olympics group and their student-athletes to create activities and to set up special events.

PAC schools also are scheduling other types of events, in several cases some schools are scheduling a busy slate of activities for the week. Several schools will be hosting banquets to honor student-athlete achievements in the classroom, on

campus, and on the athletic field.

Some PAC schools will be actively involved with local elementary schools, as both Chatham University and Thiel College student-athletes will travel to local schools, where they will read and interact with preschoolers and elementary students. Westminster College will be hosting a "Field Day" where over 100 fourth grade students from an area elementary school will spend the day at the college receiving instruction and participating with student-athletes in a variety of sports activities. Bethany College will be hosting a variety of "movie nights" on campus to bring the entire campus community together.

The conference SAAC has expressed the importance of involving faculty members in events and hopes that faculty will be invited to practices or contests during the week or to invite coaches to class.

The NCAA national office also will be focusing attention on the Special Olympics partnership during the week. Division III will donate \$1 (up to \$5,000) to Special Olympics for every new "Like" April 9-15 on the division's Facebook page, and also plans events for staff members to celebrate the week in Indianapolis. It also will monitor conferences' and schools' use of social media (including Facebook and Twitter), watching for opportunities to link to or "retweet" Division III Week messaging.

Founded in 1955, the Presidents' Athletic Conference continues its mission of promoting intercollegiate athletics and the pursuit of academic excellence. Consisting of 10 select private institutions in Pennsylvania, West Virginia, and Kentucky, the PAC remains a unique organization in this day of high pressure intercollegiate athletics. With academics at the center of each member's philosophy, the PAC is built on the principle that an athletic program is a part of college life, but not an entity in itself. The PAC annually crowns champions in 19 sports (10 men, nine women) as a member of NCAA Division III.

