

SCHOLAR-ATHLETES

A Standout Season

Six Yellowjackets earn Academic All-America honors for their achievements on and off the field.

By Dennis O'Donnell

Rochester students had a standout year—on the field and in academia.

In the 2014–15 school year, six Rochester students earned Academic All-America honors, a recognition administered by the College Sports Information Directors of America (CoSIDA).

Lauren Bailey '15 of the women's swimming and diving team, Emily Widra '15 of the women's rowing team, and Ethan Pacheck '15, of the men's cross country and track

and field teams were honored this spring. They joined three honorees from the fall seasons: Alex Swanger '15 and Griffin Drake '15 of men's soccer, and Matthew Mender '16, a defensive tackle on the football team.

Swanger and Drake were key members of a soccer team that reached the second round of the NCAA Division III playoffs and that was known for its defense,

posting eight shutouts and holding four other teams to one goal.

Swanger, a financial economics major from Penfield, New York, repeated as an Academic

All-American, earning the same accolade in 2014. He worked as a research assistant in a campus Medical Center group, Surgical Health Outcomes & Research Enterprise. On the soccer pitch, Swanger earned all-UAA honors for the fourth straight season.

Drake, a defender from Indianapolis, graduated with degrees in political science and philosophy. A tutor for the political science class Business in Politics and a TA for Argument in Political Science, he was also a broadcaster on the campus Internet radio station, WRUR's "The Sting." When Rochester traveled to Germany in May 2015, he blogged for the team on the athletics department site.

Mender, from Glens Falls, New York, earned all-Liberty League honors in football and ranked among the league's tackle leaders. A biomedical engineering major, he has worked in an auditory neuroscience lab. He was the only football player from a New York State Division III college named to the Academic All-America team this year.

Bailey and Widra were named to CoSIDA's at-large team, a designation that encompasses sports that do not have their



PITCH PERFECT: Two soccer players were named Academic All-Americans last fall: Alex Swanger '15 (left) earned the honor for the second straight year, and Griffin Drake '15 was tapped for the first time.



STORIED SEASONS: Academic All-Americans Lauren Bailey '15, Emily Widra '15, Ethan Pacheck '15, and Matthew Mender '16 (clockwise from upper left), helped lead their Yellowjacket teammates throughout the 2014-15 athletic seasons.

own specific team, including swimming, lacrosse, field hockey, ice hockey, fencing, tennis, golf, and others.

In the pool, Bailey, a chemical engineering major from Ossining, New York, was named the Liberty League Women's Swimmer of the Year for three straight years. In her last two seasons, she earned All-America honors in six events at the NCAA championships—four as a junior, two as a senior.

Widra, from Washington, D.C., became the first women's rower to earn Academic All-America honors from CoSIDA. She graduated with a triple major—English literature, anthropology, and psychology. As a junior, she was named to the All-America team by the College Rowing Coaches Association. She was a member of the


Undergraduate English Council, serving as its secretary. She was also a teaching assistant for anthropology.

Pacheck's selection followed a family tradition. His brother, Adam '14, was named last year. Ethan, a chemical engineering major from Baldwinsville, New York, ran cross country, indoor track, and outdoor track over his career, earning a total of nine varsity letters.

This past winter, he ran on the distance medley relay team that broke the school record, posting one of Division III's top 25 times. He earned six medals in New York state competition and three more at the ECAC championships. A member of Tau Beta Pi, the engineering honor society, and a member of the American Institute

of Chemical Engineers, he was a teaching assistant for five classes—one in music, four in chemistry.

All five seniors (Swanger, Drake, Bailey, Widra, Pacheck) were elected to Phi Beta Kappa and four (Bailey, Drake, Swanger, Widra) were named Garnish Scholar-Athletes last fall. Since the first selection in 1976, a total of 92 Rochester students have earned Academic All-America honors. Thirty-seven have come in the last 10 years.

In 2014-15, Division III schools nominated 5,061 athletes to be Academic All-Americans; 466 were selected. 

Dennis O'Donnell is director of athletic communications for the Department of Athletics and Recreation.