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## 2017 North Atlantic Conference Preview



Clarkson University Golden Knights  
Potsdam, NY  
2015 Record: N/A

### Season Outlook

Clarkson is back in the NCFA in 2017 and has been placed in the North Atlantic Conference. Having been around as a club program since 2010, teams can expect Clarkson to be organized and ready to compete. Where they fall within the NAC is unknown for this fall.



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Eastern Connecticut State University Warriors  
Willimantic, Connecticut  
2016 Record: 6-2  
Head Coach: Glenn Doughty

### Season Outlook

Eastern Connecticut is coming off a very successful 2016 season where they won the North Atlantic Title game and gave eventual NCFA National Champions Oakland University a run in the NCFA final four playoffs. The Warriors rode the legs of running back Ivan Mangual throughout that championship run, Mangual went down with a game ending injury against Oakland – had he stayed healthy they very well may have defeated the Grizzlies and made a run all the way to the NCFA title game. Look for Eastern to continue their rivalry with Sacred Heart, they lost their regular season matchup with the Pioneers in 2016 but did avenge that loss when the schools matched up again in the NAC title game. Eastern expects to continue to be in the discussion for the North Atlantic Title and this year hopes to break thru all the way to Wheeling for the NCFA National Championship game.



University of Hartford Blackhawks  
West Hartford, Connecticut  
2016 Record: 0-6  
Head Coach: Martin Jones  
Assistants:  
Team Captain(s): TBD



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Returning Starters: 10

### Season Outlook

After sitting out the 2015 season, Hartford struggled to find traction in the NCFA during the 2016 season.

They did manage to field a team and help set up some foundations for future success but they found the outcomes of the NAC games rather lopsided. They hope to bridge the gap between themselves and the North Atlantic elite this fall and in the words of Coach Martin Jones “find an excuse to win” With 10 returning starters the Hawks should be able to lean on that experience to find their way.



**Sacred Heart University Pioneers**  
Fairfield, Connecticut  
**2016 Record:** 6-1 / #3 Final National Ranking  
**Head Coach:** Greg Jones  
**Assistants:**  
RJ Noel  
John Shannon  
Mike Statuti



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Rob Johnson  
Rudy Favard

**Team Captain(s):** Brian Moore, Rory McKane, Chris Criscuolo, Curtis Sutherland, Andrew Crookes

**Returning Starters:** 18

**Players to Watch:** Brian Moore, Curtis Sutherland, Emir Drazhi, Chris Criscuolo, Mark Barranger, Jordan James, Dalvyn James, Rory McKane, Mark Threlkeld, Andrew Crookes, Tim Brown, Gianni Papadopoulos, Mike Lynch, AJ Hoy

### Season Outlook

Sacred Heart continued the success they found in 2015 last fall, finishing in first place in the NAC after the regular season but falling in a heartbreaker to Eastern Connecticut in the North Atlantic Title game.

After the dust settled The Pioneers finished 3<sup>rd</sup> in the final NCFA national rankings. Considering in 2015 they narrowly missed an NCFA national championship game berth, the 2016 season was considered somewhat of a disappointment. In 2017 the Pioneers have to replace last year's NCFA Offensive Player of the Year, QB Will Kassar who finished with over 1400 yards passing and 17 touchdowns. They do return some very impressive talents, Mr. Do-everything Mark Barranger a two-way NCFA All-American returns as a WR/S as does leading rusher from 2016 Jordan James. Also returning on offense is Chris Criscuolo who was right behind Barranger in receiving yards. The defense should be strong once again in 2017 with Barranger roaming the back end and DE Brian Moore putting pressure on opposing QBs once again (11 sacks in 2016). Look for 2017 North Atlantic championship to once again go thru the Pioneers as Sacred Heart should be considered one of the pre-season favorites to secure a berth in the NCFA national championship game this fall.



The University of Vermont Catamounts  
Burlington, Vermont

2016 Record: 4-3

Head Coach: Jeff Porter

Assistants:

Jeff Lamkins – Offensive Coordinator

Jason Paul – Defensive Coordinator

**Team Captain(s):** Eddie Hockenbury, Patrick McGrath, Sam Messenger

**Returning Starters:** 10

**Players to Watch:** Eddie Hockenbury, Kyle Morand, Ryan Augustine, Josh Taylor, Sam Messenger



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### Season Outlook

Vermont was once the top dog in the North Atlantic but has fallen to the middle of the pack the last couple of years with back to back 4-3 finishes. Last year they played very well at home, finishing with a 4-0 home record. That success could not be translated to their road trips and they finished the year 0-3 on the road, which included lopsided road losses to regular season NAC leaders Sacred Heart and NAC

Title game winner Eastern Connecticut. Coach Porter will look returning All-American offensive lineman Sam Messenger to lead the way on offense to help Kyle Morand have the time to execute the Catamounts wide open offense. Coach Porter wears dual hats as the head coach and special teams' coordinator, he should have a good squad on that front with returning kicker/ punter Josh Taylor who should be among the NCFA's best specialists this fall. If a few bounces can go their way Vermont could be able to challenge Sacred Heart and Eastern Connecticut and reclaim their NAC throne.