Cortland’s Matt O’Connell Named SUNYAC Men’s Lacrosse Player of the Year; Ten Red Dragons Chosen to All-Conference Squad

SUNY Cortland senior midfielder Matt O’Connell (Camillus/West Genesee) has been selected as the 2006 State University of New York Athletic Conference (SUNYAC) Men’s Lacrosse Player of the Year. He is also one of 10 Cortland players on the SUNYAC all-conference team, including six first-team selections.

Joining O’Connell on the first team are senior attack Kyle Lambert (Brentwood), senior midfielder Mike Abbott (Syracuse/Nottingham), junior long-stick midfielder Cheney Raymond (Camillus/West Genesee), senior defenseman Dan Schmitt (North Syracuse/Cicero-North Syracuse) and senior goalie Ben Gaebel (Deferiet/Carthage).

Sophomore attack Ryan Heath (Baldwinsville/C.W. Baker), junior midfielder Ryan Simensky (Locust Valley), sophomore short-stick midfielder Keith Greene (Brentwood) and senior defenseman Casey Dougherty (Syracuse/Corcoran) were chosen to the All-SUNYAC second team.

O’Connell leads the Red Dragons this season with 55 points on 30 goals and a team-high 25 assists. He has recorded 35 ground balls and has surpassed the career 100-point mark (65 goals, 68 assists for 133 points).

Lambert has scored a team-high 35 goals and is second on the squad with 52 total points. He recently became Cortland’s career goal-scoring leader with 155 and is sixth at the College with 202 career points.

Abbott, the 2005 SUNYAC Player of the Year, has 31 goals, eight assists and 76 ground balls this spring. He has won 53 percent of his faceoffs (72-of-137) and has reached the career 100-point mark in just two seasons (74 goals, 28 assists for 102 points). Raymond has scored 10 goals and has assisted on three others with the long stick this season. He leads the Red Dragons with 82 ground balls.

Schmitt has one assist and 49 ground balls in 15 games. Gaebel, the Red Dragons’ starting goalie in every game this season, has a 5.62 goals against average and a 64.2 save percentage. In six SUNYAC games, Gaebel posted a 4.30 goals against average and a 69.8 save percentage.

Heath has 20 goals and 16 assists for 36 points despite having played in only 13 games this spring. He also has scooped up 24 ground balls. Simensky is fourth on the team with 38 points (21 goals, 17 assists) and has 34 ground balls. He surpassed the career 100-point mark and currently has 121 points (58 goals, 63 assists) in three seasons.

Greene has two assists and 13 ground balls in 15 contests, while Dougherty has 23 ground balls in 17 games, 16 as a starter. Cortland’s defense has allowed only six goals per game and has given up 10 goals in a game just once in 17 outings.

Cortland, 14-3, won the SUNYAC tournament title last Saturday at Geneseo and will be hosting an NCAA second round game on Saturday at 6 p.m. The Red Dragons are making their sixth straight national tournament appearance.

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