

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Contacts:

Nancy Marazzi (nancy.marazzi@millsport.com)
Millsport LLC
(203) 977-0539

Dick Lipe (rlipe@bentley.edu)
College Sports Information Directors of America
(781) 891-2334

UMASS FIRST BASEMAN EARNS FIRST-EVER VERIZON SOFTBALL

ACADEMIC ALL-AMERICA® OF THE YEAR HONORS FOR HER UNIVERSITY

Esker earns first-ever honors for Southern Illinois at Edwardsville in the College Division.

STAMFORD, Conn., May 29, 2003 – Brandi Cross has become the first Verizon Academic All-America Team Member of the Year (University Division) for the University of Massachusetts as announced today by Verizon and the College Sports Information Directors of America (CoSIDA). A first baseman for the Minutewoman softball team, Cross was selected to softball's first team and chosen as the Softball Team Member of the Year. Cross is one of three players from the University of Massachusetts named to the national team.

Hitting 11 home runs in a single season, a UMass record, Cross has led her team to their 16th Atlantic 10 conference title. She was selected as the UMass Female Scholar Athlete of the Year and the Atlantic 10 All-Conference First Baseman.

Teammate Kaila Holtz also earned Academic All-America first team honors for the Minutewomen. Holtz was the Atlantic 10 conference Pitcher of the Year for a second consecutive year with an ERA that is 13th-lowest in the nation. Rounding out the trifecta for Massachusetts was senior outfielder Anna Perey, named a second team honoree. Massachusetts finished its season 39-15 after winning its 16th Atlantic 10 title.

“Brandi Cross has been a cornerstone to the success that UMass softball has enjoyed both on the field and in the classroom during her four year career,” said Elaine Sortino, head softball coach at UMass. “She truly epitomizes the words ‘student-athlete.’ We are all so very proud to share in this elite honor, which is the culmination of her outstanding career.”

Seniors Lea Dorto of Kent State and Marci Mitchell of Carson-Newman College, both first team honorees, have perfect 4.0 grade point averages, as do second teamer Kate Jaspers of Mississippi State and third team selection Molly Gale, a sophomore from Gettysburg.

The Atlantic 10 and Big 10 conferences each named four players to the national softball team. Both Massachusetts (A-10) and Iowa (Big 10) won their conference tournament and advanced to the NCAA tournament.

- more -

Softball Team

In the college division, Jenny Esker from SIU-Edwardsville captured her university's first Softball Academic All-America Team Member of the Year honor. Esker, a two-time national team member, was the first Cougar player to record more than 10 home runs and 30 stolen bases in a season.

The complete list of student-athletes named to the Verizon Academic All-America Softball Team is attached (see Attachment A).

The Verizon Academic All-America Teams program recognizes student-athletes who have succeeded on the field and in the classroom. Individuals are selected by votes from CoSIDA, the 1,800-member College Sports Information Directors of America. To be eligible, an athlete must be a varsity starter or key reserve and maintain a cumulative GPA of at least 3.20 on a scale of 4.00. Since the program's inception in 1952, over 12,000 student-athletes have been honored with the award.

Under an agreement with CoSIDA, Verizon has been the exclusive sponsor of the Academic All-America program since 1985. A Fortune 10 company, Verizon Communications (NYSE:VZ) is one of the world's leading providers of communications services. Verizon companies are the largest providers of wireline and wireless communications in the United States, with 136.6 million access line equivalents and 33.3 million Verizon Wireless customers. Verizon is the third-largest long-distance carrier for U.S. consumers, with 13.2 million long-distance lines, and the company is also the largest directory publisher in the world, as measured by directory titles and circulation. With approximately \$67 billion in annual revenues and 227,000 employees, Verizon's global presence extends to the Americas, Europe, Asia and the Pacific. For more information about Verizon, visit www.verizon.com. For more information about the Academic All-America programs, visit www.cosida.com or email academicallamerica@millsport.com.

#

ATTACHMENT A

2002-2003 VERIZON ACADEMIC ALL-AMERICA® SOFTBALL TEAM (UNIVERSITY DIVISION)

FIRST TEAM

PS.	NAME	SCHOOL	YR	HOMETOWN	GPA/MAJOR
P	Lauren Bay	Oklahoma State	Sr.	Trail, BC	3.54/International Business
P	Kaila Holtz	Massachusetts	Sr.	North Vancouver, BC	3.82/Exercise Science
C	Christine Stephens	New Mexico St.	Sr.	Albuquerque, NM	3.56/Social Work, Criminal Science
IF	Brandi Cross **	Massachusetts	Sr.	Diamond Bar, CA	3.92/Psychology
IF	Lea Dorto	Kent State	Sr.	North Canton, OH	4.00/Computer Info. Systems
IF	Kristin Johnson	Iowa	Sr.	Cedar Rapids, IA	3.73/Communication Studies
IF	Katie Shea	Ball State	Sr.	Royal Oak, MI	3.81/Exercise Science
OF	Heather Brousseau	Hofstra	Sr.	Southington, CT	3.83/Accounting
OF	Sandy Lewis	Michigan State	Sr.	Empire, MI	3.63/Human Biology
OF	Sarah Martz	DePaul	Jr.	Lanark, IL	3.76/Secondary Education Math
DP	Jennifer Moran	UNC-Greensboro	Sr.	Madera, CA	3.85/Biology

SECOND TEAM

PS.	NAME	SCHOOL	YR	HOMETOWN	GPA/MAJOR
P	Lindsay Chouinard	DePaul	Sr.	Fresno, CA	3.35/Finance
P	Amy Harre	Southern Illinois	So.	Nashville, TN	3.92/Biology
C	Lyndsey Angus	Kentucky	Sr.	Leominster, MA	3.31/Kinesiology
IF	Kara Brun	Arizona State	Sr.	Glendale, AZ	3.33/Communications
IF	Katie Evans	Texas A&M – Corpus Christi	Jr.	Tempe, AZ	3.87/Secondary Education
IF	Kate Jaspers	Mississippi State	Jr.	Prescott, AZ	4.00/Psychology
IF	LeeAnne Mongar	Tennessee Tech	Sr.	Chattanooga, TN	3.71/Health & Physical Science
OF	Laura Beckert	Yale	Sr.	Winter Haven, FL	3.57/Molecular, Cellular & Developmental Biology
OF	Toni Orr	Morehead State	Sr.	Fort Madison, IA	3.88/Elementary Education
OF	Anna Perey	Massachusetts	Sr.	Chino Valley, AZ	3.59/Exercise Science
DP	Brandi McGuire	Tulsa	Sr.	Tulsa, OK	3.92/Accounting

THIRD TEAM

PS.	NAME	SCHOOL	YR	HOMETOWN	GPA/MAJOR
P	Brandi Adams	Saint Joseph's	Sr.	Newton, PA	3.96/Elementary Education
P	Cat Osterman	Texas	So.	Houston, TX	3.24/Education
C	Adriana Garcia	Arizona State	Sr.	Riverside, CA	3.50/Elementary Education
IF	Kim Eiben	Arkansas	Sr.	North Delta, BC	3.85/Criminology
IF	Andrea Hillsey	Purdue	So.	White Lake, MI	3.35/Movement & Sport Science
IF	Margaret Schick	Michigan State	Sr.	Grass Lake, MI	3.90/Human Biology
IF	Kim Wilmoth	Baylor	So.	Garland, TX	3.96/Accounting, Business
OF	Erin Brooks	Fordham	Jr.	Norwich, NY	3.84/Business Information Systems
OF	Kris Burdine	Ball State	Jr.	New Palestine, IN	3.73/Marketing
OF	Kristen Zaleski	Southwest Texas State	Sr.	Temple, TX	3.35/Criminal Justice
DP	Jenny Bender	Lehigh	Sr.	Flemington, NJ	3.22/Art

**** Denotes Verizon Academic All-America® Team Member of the Year – University Division**

2002-2003 VERIZON ACADEMIC ALL-AMERICA® SOFTBALL TEAM (COLLEGE DIVISION)**FIRST TEAM**

PS.	NAME	SCHOOL	YR	HOMETOWN	GPA/MAJOR
P	Marci Mitchell	Carson-Newman (TN)	Sr.	Lithonia, GA	4.00/Mathematics
P	Britni Buford	Truman (MO)	Sr.	Kahoka, MO	3.92/Exercise Science
C	Jessica Brewer	William Penn(IA)	Sr.	Walla Walla, WA	3.82/Elementary Ed.
IF	Emily Conover	Bethel (MN)	Sr.	Crystal, MN	3.93/Biochemistry
IF	KD Smith	Barry (FL)	Sr.	Bradenton, FL	3.90/Elementary Ed.
IF	Liz Swary	Washington(MO)	So.	Cleveland, OH	3.91/Economics
IF	Lizbeth Oppenheimer	SUNY-Oneonta	Sr.	Webster, NY	3.85/Biology
OF	Jenny Esker **	SIU-Edwardsville	Jr.	Steeleville, IL	3.98/Physics
OF	Melissa Roberts	Emory (GA)	Sr.	Billings, MT	3.87/Neuroscience & Behavioral Biology
OF	Stephanie Cameron	Thomas More(KY)	Sr.	Erlanger, KY	3.83/Business
DP	Jennifer Potts	Longwood (VA)	Sr.	Purcellville, VA	3.40/Biology

SECOND TEAM

PS.	NAME	SCHOOL	YR	HOMETOWN	GPA/MAJOR
P	Susan Churchwell	California-Davis	Sr.	Lake Forest, CA	3.88/Economics
P	Jennifer Mackson	Grand Valley St.(MI)	Jr.	Pinconning, MI	3.35/Education
C	Mary Nicol	Emory (GA)	So.	Barrington, IL	3.79/Environmental Studies, Political Science
IF	Julie Gentner	SUNY-Courtland	Sr.	Williamsville, NY	3.40/Sport Management
IF	Lisa Gentilella	Salisbury (MD)	Sr.	Hamilton, NJ	3.50/Communication Arts
IF	Christina Diller	Gustavus Adolphus(MN)	Sr.	Menomonie, WI	3.71/Biology, Pre-Med
IF	Chyanne Kleve	Upper Iowa	Jr.	Waucoma, IA	3.74/Criminology
OF	Jessica Feerrar	Lycoming (PA)	Sr.	Lock Haven, PA	4.00/Biology
OF	Megan Koeller	Wis.-Whitewater	Sr.	Potosi, WI	3.89/Elementary Ed.
OF	Jana Allison	Missouri Southern	Sr.	Lebanon, MO	3.94/Pre-Med.
DP	Katie Waldo	SIU-Edwardsville	Sr.	Peoria, IL	3.61/Psychology

THIRD TEAM

PS.	NAME	SCHOOL	YR	HOMETOWN	GPA/MAJOR
P	Julianne Lovejoy	LIU-C.W. Post (NY)	Sr.	Riverview, FL	3.87/Computer Art
P	Krystal Poulin	Southern Arkansas	Jr.	Marana, AZ	3.93/Biological Science
C	Joy Long	Delta State (MS)	Jr.	Oxford, FL	3.63/Phys. Education
IF	Rosey Aley	Salisbury (MD)	Jr.	Aquasco, MD	3.67/Biology
IF	Laura Heath	Trinity (CT)	Sr.	Windsor, CT	3.83/Biology
IF	Shannon Moore	St. Thomas (MN)	Sr.	Kenilworth, IL	3.52/Economics
IF	Kerri Jonas	Grand Valley State(MI)	Sr.	Jackson, MI	3.64/Health Science
OF	Molly Gale	Gettysburg (PA)	So.	Franklin, MI	4.00/History
OF	Lyndsey Knight	Southern Arkansas	Sr.	Atlanta, TX	3.83/Accounting
OF	Megan Russell	Albion (MI)	Jr.	Portage, MI	3.88/Economics & Management
DP	Amy Behlen	Texas Lutheran	So.	Schulenburg, TX	3.53/Kinesiology

**** Denotes Verizon Academic All-America® Team Member of the Year – College Division**