Empire 8 Expands Women’s Golf Membership

ROCHESTER, N.Y. – Eight women’s golf programs will be joining the Empire 8 Conference as affiliate members starting in the 2017-18 season.

SUNY Canton, SUNY Cortland, Husson University, Johnson & Wales University, Keuka College, Rhode Island College, Suffolk University and Westfield State University will join full-time Empire 8 women’s golf members, Elmira College, Nazareth College, St. John Fisher College and Utica College.

“This is a great development for Empire 8 and the sport of women’s golf,” said Empire 8 and Hartwick College President Margaret Drugovich. “Providing quality opportunities for women is an important aspiration and we are thrilled to provide this enhancement.”

The conference began sponsoring women’s golf in the Fall of 2009 but have strictly relied on full-time members to field teams.

“Women’s golf is an emerging sport across the country,” said Empire 8 Commissioner Chuck Mitrano. “By adding these fine institutions, Empire 8 has added further support to an important opportunity for women and is a building block toward access for the NCAA Tournament. It’s an historic day for Empire 8.”

Despite not having an automatic qualification, the Empire 8 sent an individual to the NCAA Division III Championship in 2013 and then had team representation for the first time in 2014.

“The additional members will really enhance our conference by allowing our teams to get an automatic bid in two years and be provided the same opportunity as the men,” said Empire 8 women’s golf chair and St. John Fisher head coach Bob Simms.

A member conference of the NCAA Division III, the Empire 8 has nine full members and sponsors championships in 23 sports. The member institutions place the highest priority of the overall quality of the educational experience and on the successful completion of its student-athletes’ academic programs. The membership seeks to distinguish itself
among its peers group for its quality institutions, spirited and sportsmanlike competition, outstanding services and highly ethical policies and practices. Its commitment to serve educational needs of its student-athletes is the hallmark of the Empire 8.

The Empire 8’s beginnings trace back to 1964 with the founding of the Independent College Athletic Conference (ICAC). In 1991, the ICAC regrouped to become the Empire Athletic Association (EAA) and in 1999, the EAA became the Empire 8 Conference.