



Mar. 24, 2022
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Bjornson Blazes Trail At Pioneer Shootout

PORTLAND, Ore. – It's been a light couple weeks of competition for GNAC men's golf, but Simon Fraser took advantage of its time on the links to roll into the final sprint of the spring season with plenty of momentum.

Simon Fraser finished sixth in a West Region-heavy 17-team field at the Tim Tierney Pioneer Shootout at the Chuck Corica Golf Complex in Alameda, California on March 14-15. The solid team performance featured three SFU golfers who finished at even par or lower after 54 holes, including **Bailey Bjornson**, who tied for 14th at 3-under-par 213. **Kyle Mayner**, who finished at 1-under-par 215, and **Michael Crisologo**, who carded an even-par 216, also finished in the top 25 for SFU. Out of the 10 GNAC golfers to compete in the tournament, Simon Fraser had the top five finishers.

Northwest Nazarene, the only other GNAC team in attendance in Alameda, finished 15th as a team. **Lane Strand** paced the Nighthawks with a 9-over-par score of 225 to finish in a tie for 55th place while **Cole Evarts** and **Truman Gregory** both finished three strokes behind Strand.

All five teams will be teeing off this upcoming week. Montana State Billings, Saint Martin's, Simon Fraser and Western Washington will be at the Hanny Stanislaus Invitational in Turlock, California on Monday and Tuesday while Northwest Nazarene will host its own invitational in Nampa on the same dates. Every GNAC program except for Simon Fraser is scheduled to compete an additional time before the GNAC Championships in Coeur D'Alene from April 18-19.

For Saint Martin's, the Hanny Stanislaus Invitational will be its first competition since longtime Saints head coach **Kevin Bishop** announced his retirement at the end of this season. Bishop helmed the Saints program for 14 years and went to five NCAA regionals while winning three GNAC Coach of the Year awards in 2012, 2014 and 2021, when the Saints won Bishop's first GNAC Championship.

PREVIOUS TOURNAMENTS

Tim Tierney Pioneer Shootout (Chuck Corica Golf Complex, Alameda, Calif.): Team - 1, Cal State Monterey Bay, 846. 2, Cal State San Bernardino, 852. 3, Stanislaus State, 854. 6, Simon Fraser, 859. 15, Northwest Nazarene, 902. **Individual** - T-1, Liam Allder, Cal State Monterey Bay, 207. T-1, Ananian Kaushik, Cal State East Bay, 207. 3, Michael Jura III, Stanislaus State, 208. T-14, Bailey Bjornson, Simon Fraser, 213. T-22, Kyle Mayner, Simon Fraser, 215. T-25, Michael Crisologo, Simon Fraser, 216. T-43, Ryan Hodgins, Simon Fraser, 220. T-46, Ryan Stolys, Simon Fraser, 221. T-55, Lane Strand, Northwest Nazarene, 225.

AROUND THE GNAC

MONTANA STATE BILLINGS

- Montana State Billings last completed at the Poppy Ridge Invitational on March 7-8 and performed well, collecting team and individual podium finishes. The team placed third with a 36-hole score of 12-over-par 588, one stroke behind second-place Cal State San Bernardino and six strokes ahead of fourth-place Simon Fraser. The Yellowjackets led the tournament by a stroke at the

halfway mark after shooting a team 296 on day one, but slipped to third on the final day despite improving by four strokes to 292 as a team.

- **Riley Kaercher** matched the MSUB program with an individual third-place finish, as he was among four golfers to tie for third at even-par 144. Kaercher shot a 1-under-par 71 on day one, which had him tied for second on the leaderboard, and a 1-over-par 73 on day two.
- **Caleb Trost, Riley Lawrence** and **Dawson Strobel** all achieved low rounds of even-par 72. Trost hit his 72 on the first day and finished tied for 12th at 3-over-par 147, while Lawrence and Strobel rallied to card their 72s on the final day. Lawrence finished tied for 19th at 4-over-par 148 while Strobel tied for 22nd at 5-over-par 149. Sophomore Kevin Kolb rounded out MSUB's five with a 158, carding a low round of 77 on day two.
- Montana State Billings will compete next at the Hanny Stanislaus Invitational in Turlock, California on Monday and Tuesday.

NORTHWEST NAZARENE

- Northwest Nazarene competed at the Pioneer Shootout and finished 15th with a 54-hole team score of 902. Their cumulative low round was 284, which they accomplished in the first 18 holes.
- Sophomore **Lane Strand** paced NNU, tying for 55th place at 9-over-par 225. Strand finished strong, shooting an even-par 72 for his low round on day two. Strand also shot a 1-over-par 73 over the first 18 holes of day one.
- Sophomore **Cole Evarts** and freshman **Truman Gregory** each finished tied for 73rd at 12-over-par 228. Gregory also carded an even-par round of 72, notching his in round two. Evarts shot a 73 on the final day. Senior **Tyler Joplin** at 232 and sophomore **Grayson Giboney** at 233 completed the Nighthawks' scoring five. Giboney shot a 2-under-par 70 in the first round and was up in the top 10 of the leaderboard, but faded over the final two days.
- Northwest Nazarene will be in action next at the Tim Tierney Pioneer Shootout in Alameda, California on Monday and Tuesday. They will play the role of host again at the Northwest Nazarene Invitational in Nampa on Monday and Tuesday.

SAINT MARTIN'S

- Saint Martin's last competed at the Poppy Ridge Invitational on March 7-8. The Saints finished 10th as a team with a 36-hole score of 609, two strokes behind Hawaii Pacific and Northwest Nazarene and seven strokes ahead of 11th-place Cal State San Marcos.
- Senior **Dennis Geissler** led the way individually for SMU, tying for 22nd with a 5-over-par 149. Geissler started off the tournament with his low round of 73. Seniors **Tyler Fitchett** and **Max Turnquist** each finished at 7-over-par 151 and tied for 29th, but took vastly different roads to get there. Fitchett was consistent, carding a 76 followed by a 75. Turnquist shot an 80 on day one but stormed back with a 1-under-par 71 on the final day, the best round by a Saint Martin's player.
- Saint Martin's recently announced that longtime head coach **Kevin Bishop** will retire at the end of the season after 14 years in charge of the program. Bishop won his first GNAC championship with the Saints last season, when he was selected as GNAC Coach of the Year for the third time in his career.
- The Saints will compete at the Hanny Stanislaus Invitational in Turlock, California on Monday and Tuesday.

SIMON FRASER

- Simon Fraser was the top GNAC team at the Pioneer Shootout, finishing sixth as a team with a 54-hole score of 5-under-par 859. Simon Fraser was three strokes ahead of seventh-place Holy Names and two strokes behind Chico State and Cal State East Bay for fourth.

- Individually, SFU placed three golfers in the top 25 with even par scores or lower. Freshman **Bailey Bjornson** led the way, tying for 14th at 3-under-par 213. On the par-72 course, Bjornson hit or went under par in every single round with a 71 in round one, 70 in round two and 72 in round three. Freshman **Kyle Mayner** finished in a tie for 22nd at 1-under-par 215, recovering from a comparatively high first round to shoot a 3-under-par 69 in round two and a 71 in round three. Sophomore **Michael Crisologo** finished at even-par 216, carding consistent rounds of 73, 71 and 72 to finish tied for 25th place.
- Simon Fraser's final two golfers weren't far behind, still finishing ahead of any other GNAC competitors. Freshman **Ryan Hodgins** shot at 4-over-par 220, tallying an even-par 72 in the final round. Junior **Ryan Stolys** was one stroke behind at 221 and set at even-par after two rounds.
- Simon Fraser will join three other GNAC programs at the Hanny Stanislaus Invitational in Turlock, California on Monday and Tuesday.

WESTERN WASHINGTON

- Western Washington has not competed in over a month, but finished on the podium in both of their previous spring tournaments. At the CSUSM Fujikura Invite at the Shadowridge Country Club in Vista, California from Feb. 14-15, the Vikings finished third with a 54-hole team score of 876, seven strokes behind second-place CSU Pueblo and 12 strokes ahead of fourth. At the Bay Area Invitational at the Ruby Hill Golf Club in Pleasanton, California from Feb. 21-22, WWU finished tied for third with a 54-hole team score of 886, level with Cal State East Bay and three strokes behind second-place Sonoma State.
- Senior **Aidan Thain** led the Vikings in both tournaments. At the Fujikura Invite, Thain carded a 1-under-par 215 to finish tied for seventh, finishing strongly with a 4-under-par 68 and a 1-under-par 71. At the Bay Area Invitational, Thain finished at even-par 216, led by a round of 2-under-par 70 in the first 18 holes.
- Western Washington wouldn't have achieved two podium finishes without clutch rounds throughout the Vikings line-up. At Fujikura, WWU received top-15 finishes from senior **Devin Andrews** and junior **Jordan Lee**. Andrews finished tied for 13th at 1-over-par 217 with a low round of 71. Lee finished in 15th, a stroke back at 218, with a low round of 69. The two reversed order at the Bay Area Invitational, with Lee finishing tied for 12th after carding a 4-over-par 220 and Andrews slotted into 16th place a stroke behind at 221. Thain, Lee and Andrews all shot low rounds of 70 over the first 18 holes.
- Western Washington will return to competition at the Hanny Stanislaus Invitational in Turlock, California on Monday and Tuesday.