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Record-Setting Round Helps Western Washington To SMU Invitational Title

PORTLAND, Ore. – All five GNAC women’s golf programs teed off for the first time this season on Monday and Tuesday at the SMU Invitational at The Home Course in Dupont, Washington, but one program edged its way above the rest as one athlete swung into the record books.

Western Washington jumped out to a seven-stroke lead after the first 18 holes on the back of an outstanding performance from **Megan Billeter**, who shot a 68, to tie the GNAC record for the lowest single round. The Vikings needed every bit of it, holding off a second-day charge from Simon Fraser and host Saint Martin’s to win the team title with a total of 616. Simon Fraser finished one stroke behind at 617, while the Saints finished five strokes behind the Vikings with 621.

The only non-GNAC team at the tournament, Western New Mexico, was a far more distant fourth, followed by Northwest Nazarene and Montana State Billings. Three golfers from Bellevue College competed in the event, including individual winner Sarah Lawrence, but Bellevue fell short of the required four golfers to factor into the team standings.

Billeter’s 68 is tied for the lowest ever GNAC round on any course with former Concordia golfer Cammie Decker, who shot hers at the Dennis Rose Invitational in October 2019. The round is a Western Washington school record.

Billeter shot her 68 on the same course where the Vikings won the GNAC Championship in April 2021. The lowest round score from that championship event was a 76 by defending GNAC individual champion **Kathryn Crimp** from Saint Martin’s. Crimp finished seventh in this week’s invitational.

Billeter hit a 74 on the second day to finish with a score of 2-under-par-142. Despite her record-breaking Monday, the junior from Spokane, Washington finished one stroke behind Lawrence, who shot 3-under-par-141 with a low round of 67. Behind Lawrence, however, the rest of the top ten was all GNAC athletes. Simon Fraser’s **Shirin Anjarwalla**, Northwest Nazarene’s **Hannah Halloway** and Western Washington’s **Claire Moon** rounded out the top five, each at 151 and + 7.

Two GNAC programs will also compete next week in different tournaments. Montana State Billings heads to the Hardrock Invitational in Rapid City, S.D. on Sept. 20-21. Simon Fraser will spend the same dates in Dallas, Texas at the DBU Classic.

LAST WEEK’S TOURNAMENTS

SMU Invitational (Sept. 13-14 at The Home Course, Dupont, Wash.): Team - 1, Western Washington, 616. 2, Simon Fraser, 617. 3, Saint Martin’s, 621. 5, Northwest Nazarene, 645. 6, MSU Billings, 659. **Individual** - 1, Sarah Lawrence, Bellevue College, 141. 2, Megan Billeter, Western Washington, 142. T-3, Shirin Anjarwalla, Simon Fraser, 151. T-3, Hannah Halloway, Northwest Nazarene, 151. T-3, Claire Moon, Western Washington, 151. 6, Madison Gridley, Northwest Nazarene, 152. 7, Kathryn Crimp, Saint Martin’s, 153. 8, Ava Koukofikas, Simon Fraser, 154. T-9, Jada French, Saint Martin’s, 155. T-9, Hoku Nagamine, Saint Martin’s, 155.

AROUND THE GNAC

MONTANA STATE BILLINGS

- Montana State Billings finished sixth in the SMU Invitational with a team score of 659.
- Senior **Kinsey Irvin** was the Yellowjackets' top finisher, shooting a 157 for 13th place and a low round of 76.
- Fellow senior **Tierney Messmer** was the next MSUB golfer on the leaderboard in 27th place with a score of 166, followed closely by freshman and Billings native **Mailyn Armstrong** in 28th with a score of 167. MSUB's final two golfers were similarly grouped on the leaderboard, with senior **Jalen Wagner** shooting a 175 for 31st and sophomore **Brennan Larson** shooting 176 for 32nd.
- Montana State Billings will continue its season next week in South Dakota for the Hardrock Invitational on Sept. 20 and 21.

NORTHWEST NAZARENE

- Northwest Nazarene came fifth in the SMU Invitational with a team score of 645.
- The Nighthawks received outstanding individual performances from redshirt junior **Hannah Halloway** and sophomore **Madison Gridley**. Halloway shot a 73 on the final day to rally herself into a tie for third place with a final score of 151. Gridley shot identical rounds of 76 on both days to finish in sixth place at 152.
- Freshman **Brianna Shervik** shot a 163 in her first tournament, tying for 23rd place. Sophomore **Allison MacMillan** came 33rd after shooting a 179 while sophomore **Hailey Potter's** 196 put her in 35th.
- Northwest Nazarene is not scheduled to compete until Oct. 8 and 9 at the Westminster Wasatch Invitational in Utah.

SAINT MARTIN'S

- Saint Martin's came third in its own tournament at The Home Course. The Saints were 14 strokes off the lead after Day 1, but tied for the lowest team score of 307 on the second day to rally to finish just five strokes behind the winners, with a final total of 621.
- Junior **Kathryn Crimp**, the 2021 GNAC Championships Medalist, had a solid seventh-place showing that led the Saints. Crimp shot a low score of 75, which was better than either round during her championship-winning performance. Crimp shot a 78 on the final day to finish with a 153.
- The Saints placed two other golfers in the top 10. Juniors **Jada French** and **Hoku Nagamine** finished with identical scores of 155 to tie for ninth place. It was an impressive comeback on French's part as she was six strokes behind her teammate after day one but shot a 72 on the final day to storm into the top 10. French's 72 was the third-lowest single round in the tournament.
- Senior **Michaela Morris** finished 14th, and freshman **Hannah White** rounded out the scoring Saints, coming 30th in her first tournament. Senior **Katherine Swor**, competing as an individual, shot a 163 to finish in a tie for 23rd.
- Saint Martin's will compete next at the RJGA Shootout at Estrella on Sept. 27-28 in Goodyear, Arizona.

SIMON FRASER

- Simon Fraser returned to the links for the first time since March 2020 and nearly had a fairytale ending. Down seven strokes to Western Washington after the first day, Simon Fraser tied for the lowest team score of 307 the second day and nearly reeled in the Vikings, losing in the end by just one stroke with a total of 617.
- **Shirin Anjarwalla** led all SFU golfers with a score of 151, which allowed her to grab a share of third place. It's a massive statement for Anjarwalla who, in addition to the COVID-19 layoff, had only finished two tournaments since March 2019 due to chronic back injuries.
- Freshman **Ava Koukofikas** had a strong start to her collegiate career, finishing in eighth place with a score of 154. Sophomore **Natasha Kozlowski** just missed out on the top 10 as her score of 156 put her in a tie for 11th place.

- Simon Fraser's final two golfers, freshman **Brooke Brezovski** and sophomore **Kassie Muanyam**, finished tied for 20th with scores of 162. Muanyam was key to Simon Fraser's second-day surge, however, improving her first-day score by 10 strokes the second time through the course.

- Simon Fraser will spend Monday and Tuesday in Dallas, Texas at the DBU Classic. They received votes in the preseason Women's Golf Coaches Association Rankings.

WESTERN WASHINGTON

- Western Washington opened its GNAC title defense with the overall team crown at the SMU Invitational. The Vikings jumped out to a big lead on day one and hung on over the second day, winning by one stroke with a total of 616.

- Junior **Megan Billeter** led the Vikings with a second-place individual finish. Her first-round score of 68 was tied for the lowest ever in a single round by a GNAC golfer. Billeter was stride-for-stride with Bellevue College's Sarah Lawrence across both days. Lawrence and Billeter shot identical 74s on the final day, giving Lawrence a one-stroke win by virtue of her opening-round 67.

- Sophomore **Claire Moon** shot 151, nine strokes behind Billeter but still good enough for a tie for third. Moon's finish meant Western Washington was the only school with two top-five finishers.

- Lina Hattenbach, a freshman from Sweden, finished as the third-highest Viking and tied for 16th overall with her score of 161. Sophomore **Dani Bailey** was only a stroke back at 162, which gave her a tie for 20th. Junior **Sarah Shea** rounded out Western Washington's five with her score of 172 giving her a 29th place finish.

- The Vikings compete next in Goodyear, Arizona, where they will join Saint Martin's among the teams at the RJGA Shootout at Estrella from Sept. 27-28.