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Western Washington Unanimously Picked First In GNAC Preseason Coaches Poll

PORTLAND, Ore. – After reaching the NCAA Division II semifinals last year, Western Washington enters the 2016 season as the unanimous favorite in the Great Northwest Athletic Conference Women’s Soccer Preseason Coaches Poll.

Western Washington, which hasn’t lost a GNAC contest since 2013, is looking for a fifth consecutive regular season conference title. That would surpass Seattle Pacific’s record of four consecutive titles from 2002 to 2005, which the Vikings tied last season.

The Vikings bring back seven starters from last year’s team, which produced a program record 21 wins before the season came to an end in the national semifinals against three-time defending national champion Grand Valley State.

Among those returners for WWU are three players from the defensive line that produced the 14th best goals against average (0.575) in the nation last season, including Second Team All-GNAC selection **Sierra Shugarts**. Joining that defensive line is junior transfer **Ashley Homer**, who redshirted last season after starting at goalkeeper at Saint Rose, where she recorded a GAA of 0.38 in her sophomore season.

Western Washington also brings back to its front line sophomore **Gabriela Pelogi**, senior **Caitlyn Jobanek** and senior **Elise Aylward**, who each received Honorable Mention All-GNAC last season. Pelogi scored 10 goals including five game-winners last year, while Jobanek scored two goals and assisted another in the GNAC Championships. Aylward scored six goals in her junior season.

Junior midfielder **Emily Webster** is also back with the team after being a unanimous First Team All-GNAC selection. Webster started in every game as a sophomore and played a part in eight goals, assisting on five and scoring three.

Despite finishing third last year, the SPU was picked by a majority of coaches for second place in the conference. The Falcons have won the conference regular season title eight times in 15 years and reached the NCAA Division II playoffs for the 11th year in a row last fall after reaching the GNAC Championships title match for the third year in a row.

Seattle Pacific is led by the defending GNAC Player of the Year **Hannah Huesers**, who scored a GNAC-best 14 goals last season. The senior forward ranks second in conference history in points per game (1.42) and goals per game (0.64). She is joined by senior midfielder **Emma Holm**, who was an All-GNAC Honorable Mention as a junior.

Junior goalkeeper **Molly Stinson** recorded a 0.81 goals against average last season for SPU, and she is surrounded by a trio of returning starters on the defense. Junior **Maddy Booster**, senior **Haley Ayers**, and junior **Maddie Sjothun** each return to support Stinson on defense after having roles as starters last year.

Concordia had little trouble making a smooth transition into the NCAA Division II ranks, taking second place in its first season as a member of the GNAC. That is now 16 years in a row that CU has finished in the top two in conference standings after doing so 15 years in a row as a member of the NAIA’s Cascade Collegiate Conference, a run which included 13 conference titles.

2015 GNAC Preseason Women’s Soccer Coaches Poll

Team (1st Place Votes)	2015 Record (Finish)	Pts.
1. Western Washington (9)	21-2-1 (11-0-1, 1st)	81
2. Seattle Pacific	14-5-2 (7-3-2, 3rd)	67
3. Concordia	11-4-3 (8-3-2, 2nd)	64
4. Central Washington	7-9-1 (5-6-1, Tie 5th)	55
5. Simon Fraser	7-6-2 (5-6-1, Tie 5th)	43
6. MSU Billings	8-7-2 (6-5-1, 4th)	37
7. Western Oregon	8-8-1 (4-7-1, 7th)	23
8. Northwest Nazarene	5-11-1 (2-9-1, 8th)	22
9. Saint Martin’s	1-11-0 (3-14-0, 9th)	13

Votes awarded on a 9-8-7-6-5-4-3-2-1 basis.

The Cavaliers return **Olivia Brock** between the goalposts again after being a unanimous selection for First Team All-GNAC. She is joined by seven other returning starters, including senior forward **Bobbi Eckler**, who scored four goals last year, and fellow First-Team All-GNAC senior defender **Shannon McMahon**.

Concordia also added to its roster sophomore forward **Maddie Misi**, who is one of three players to transfer from Oregon State after their freshman season to a GNAC school. Sophomore forward **Mariah Roggow** will now put on the navy and silver of WWU, while sophomore midfielder **Jenna Baxter** is transferring to Simon Fraser.

Central Washington has finished in the top five of the conference each of the last three years and was picked to finish in fourth place. In 2013, the Wildcats went 10-3-1 in conference play and finished the GNAC in second place. Now four starters from that 2013 team are back for their senior season, looking to repeat the success they had in their freshman campaign.

The Wildcats boast one of the most experienced rosters in the conference. The eight returning starters from last season have combined to start 283 matches over the last four years, including **Reilly Retz**, who alone has started in 53 career matches.

Simon Fraser tied with Central Washington for fifth place in the conference last year, and is picked to take fifth place again. Simon Fraser not only adds **Baxter**, who started nine games and assisted two goals for the Beavers last season, but also bring back 10 starters from its most successful team in four years.

Among those 10 returning starters for SFU are GNAC Freshman of the Year and unanimous first team selection **Christina Dickson**, who scored seven times, and All-GNAC Honorable Mention sophomore forward **Katelyn Erhardsen**, who scored a goal in each of the Clan's last two games.

Montana State Billings took fourth place in the GNAC last year and brings back its top four goal-scorers, paced by **Jessica Spang**, who tallied five goals and five assists as a sophomore. The Yellowjackets, which graduated three starting defenders and their goalkeeper, were sixth in the voting in the preseason coaches poll.

Head coach **Wojtek Krakowiak** made a point to fill the gap left in the defense, recruiting two new goalkeepers and two more defenders after the squad posted the fourth best goals against average in the GNAC last season. **Kari Kastelic** and **Sarah Coghlan** are the only returning starters on defense for MSUB.

Western Oregon was the last team to defeat Western Washington in a conference match, which happened on Oct. 19, 2013, when then freshman **Mariah Konyn** scored an unassisted goal to lift Western Oregon to a 1-0 victory over the eventual conference champions. Konyn is now back for her senior season with just two other returning starters from a Wolves team that went 4-7-1 in GNAC play in 2015.

Northwest Nazarene finished eighth in the voting, which is where the Crusaders wrapped up their 2015 campaign. The Crusaders ran one of the the most efficient offenses in the conference. Despite producing the least amount of shots (145) of any school, Northwest Nazarene ranked fourth in points (72). Goalkeeper **Daniele Ortiz** is back for her junior season with NNU after leading the GNAC in saves each of the last two seasons.

Saint Martin's rounds out the voting, taking ninth place after winning one conference match last season. The Saints finished the 2015 season on a two-match winning streak and bring back eight starters from last season, including **Taylor Gersch**, who was an All-GNAC Honorable Mention.

Eight of the nine teams will be in action on Sept. 1 to open the season. Conference play begins on Thurs., Sept. 22 with Western Oregon taking on MSU Billings followed by three other conference matches later in the day. The top three teams in the regular season standings will advance to the GNAC Championships, which will be held on Nov. 3-5 at Simon Fraser Univ. in Burnaby, B.C.

Team Capsules Follow On Next Page

GNAC Women's Soccer Teams At A Glance

CENTRAL WASHINGTON WILDCATS

Head Coach: Michael Farrand (Point Loma, 1984, 106-153-27, 17th year)

Assistants: Tarin Garrison, Amber Simms

2015 Overall Record: 7-6-2

Conference: 5-6-1 (T5th)

Letterwinners Returning: 16

Starters Returning/Lost: 8-3

Returning Starters: Allie Bohnett (D, Sr., 1 Assist, 2nd Team All-GNAC), Jessiga Haga (D/M, Sr., 2 Assists), Abbie Litka (D, Jr., 1 Assist, Honorable Mention All-GNAC), Keilin Farrand (M, Sr., 1 Goal, 5 Assists), Reilly Retz (M, Sr., 4 Goals, 2 Assists, Honorable Mention All-GNAC), Mackenzie Nolte (M, Jr., 4 Goals, 6 Assists, 2nd Team All-GNAC), Whitney Lowe (M, Jr., 5 Goals, 5 Assists, 2nd Team All-GNAC), Meghan Ward (M, Sr., 2 Assists)

Key Losses: Sydney Williams (GK), Aubrey Rodgers (D), Cassie Ripley (F)

Key Transfers: Molly Mortensen (M, So., 5-7, Tacoma, Wash. – New Mexico Highlands Univ.)

CONCORDIA CAVALIERS

Head Coach: Grant Landy (Cal Poly – San Luis Obispo, 1989, 341-66-26, 20th year)

Assistants: Jon Keister, Rob Warnell, Maureen Fitzgerald, Ashley Ames

2015 Overall Record: 11-4-3

Conference: 8-2-2 (2nd)

Letterwinners Returning: 14

Starters Returning/Lost: 8/3

Returning Starters: Olivia Brock (GK, Sr., 0.53 GAA, 1st Team All-GNAC), Shannon McMahon (D, Sr., 4 Goals, 3 Assists, 1st Team All-GNAC), Bobbi Eckler (F, Sr., 4 Goals, 2nd Team All-GNAC), Martha Heaps (D, Jr., 1 Goal, Honorable Mention All-GNAC), Ana Delgadillo (D, Jr., 17 Starts), Kayla Braunthal (M, So., 2 Assists), Gabrielle Ewing (M, So., 2 Goals, 2 Assists), Sydney Van Steenberge (F, So., 4 Goals, 1 Assist)

Key Losses: McKayla Madison (D), Alicia Alarcon (F), Kianna Green (D), Ariel Kanable (M), Hannah Smith (D)

Key Freshmen: Quinn Williams (F, 5-5, Pukalani, Hawai'i – Kamehameha), Anna Miller (GK, 5-6, Bellevue, Wash. – Issaquah), Kristina Flanagan (D, 5-3, Seattle, Wash. – Mount Rainier), Michaela Prothe (M, 5-5, Spokane, Wash. – Joel E. Ferrer)

Key Transfers: Maddie Misi (F, So., Beaverton, Ore. – Oregon State), Mallory Flatebo (F, So., Arroyo Grande, Calif. – Cal Poly)

MONTANA STATE BILLINGS YELLOWJACKETS

Head Coach: Wojtek Krakowiak (St. John's, 2003, 49-28-11, 6th year)

Assistants: Stephen Cavallo

2015 Overall Record: 8-7-2

Conference: 6-5-1 (4th)

Letterwinners Returning: 10

Starters Returning/Lost: 6/5

Returning Starters: Jessica Spang (F, Jr., 5 Goals, 5 Assists, Honorable Mention All-GNAC), Dana Lubieniecki (M, Sr., 2 Goals, 2 Assists, Honorable Mention All-GNAC), Kari Kastelic (D, Sr., Honorable Mention All-GNAC), Alycia Wright (F, So., 6 Goals), Bailey Griglio (M, So., 3 Goals), Sarah Coghlan (D, So., 1 Assist)

Key Losses: Katlyn Lokay (D), Elizabeth Howard (D), Ashely Marra (M), Teegan Koster (D), Chloe Hopps (GK)

Key Freshmen: Mackenzie Breeden (M, 5-6, Bonney Lake, Wash. – White River), Sarah Farris (D, 5-7, Lakewood, Colo. – Green Mountain), Clancee Ferrin (GK, 6-1, Billings, Mont. – Billings Senior)

Key Transfers: Kylee Inman-Wolfe (D, Jr., Soldotna, Alaska – Highline CC), Katelynn Kerkvliet (GK, So., Soldotna, Alaska – Univ. of Mary)

NORTHWEST NAZARENE CRUSADERS

Head Coach: Mary Trigg (Fresno State, 2008, 11-34-7, 4th year)

Assistants: Jen O'Neill, Dane Manley

2015 Overall Record: 5-11-1

Conference: 2-9-1 (8th)

Letterwinners Returning: 10

Starters Returning/Lost: 7/5

Returning Starters: Olivia Carter (D, So. 6 Starts); Ashley Cook-Cox (M, Jr., 1 Goal, 6 Assists, Honorable Mention All-GNAC); Sarah Jenkins (M, Sr., 3 Goals, 2 Assists); Mabinty Kanu (D, Jr., 17 Starts); Kelsey Martin (M, Jr., 3 Goals); Daniele Ortiz (GK, Jr., 4 Shutouts); Kayla Williams (D, Sr., 1 Goal, 1 Assist)

Key Losses: Nicola Nsa (F), Lexi Fesenbek (M), McCrea Nirider (D), Rachel Ball (M)

Key Freshmen: Brooke Felzien (F, Boise, Idaho – Timberline), Corrinah Schaefer (D, Boise, Idaho – Timberline), Tennyson Young (M, Meridian, Idaho – Mountain View), Isabelle Isgrig (M, Ravensdale, Wash. – Tahoma), Maddy Midstrokke (M, Olympia, Wash. – Capital), Sydney Kuehn (F, Duvall, Wash. – Cedacrest); Jordan Daniels (M, Meridian, Idaho – Rocky Mountain)

Key Transfers: Cassandra Clarke (D, Blackfoot, Idaho – Treasure Valley CC), Emily Wilkins (F, Port Orchard, Wash. – Tacoma CC), Stephanie Gibson (GK, Yakima, Wash. – Columbia Basin CC), Madi Taylor (F, Lewiston, Idaho – Treasure Valley CC)

SAINT MARTIN'S SAINTS

Head Coach: Rob Walker (Saint Martin's, 1987, 10th year)

Assistants: Bre Giove, Matt Dorman

2015 Overall Record: 3-14 **Conference:** 1-11 (9th)

Letterwinners Returning: 16

Starters Returning/Lost: 8/3

Returning Starters: Hannah Frakes (M, Sr., 2 Goals), Kelli Bannerman (F, Sr., 3 Goals, 2 Assists), Kylee Sarchett (M/F, So., 1 Assist), Gloria Petri (M, So., 3 Assists), Camryn Althausen (M, Jr., 1 Assist), Taylor Gersch (D, Sr., 16 Starts, Honorable Mention All-GNAC), Sara Massee (D, Sr., 1 Goal), Brittany Orloskey (M, Jr., 1 Goal, 1 Assist)

Key Losses: Abby McFaul (M/F), Chelsie Still (M/GK), Hattie North (D)

Key Freshmen: Shea McKnight (M, 5-8, Graham, Wash. – Graham-Kapowsin), Joslin Lindsay (F, 5-5, Tumwater, Wash. – A.G. West Black Hills), Sara Christensen (GK, 5-7, Bothell, Wash. – Bothell), Rose Robbins (D, 5-6, Centralia, Wash. – Centralia)

Key Transfers: Lauren Allison (M, Jr., Camano Island, Wash. – Everett CC), Cassie LaBrake (M, So., Marysville, Wash. – Trinity Lutheran Univ.), Dulce Armas (M, Jr., Fairfield, Calif. – Highline CC)

SEATTLE PACIFIC FALCONS

Head Coach: Arby Busey (Villanova, 1993, 14-5-2, 2nd year)

Assistants: Vanessa Valentine, Amanda Axelson, Kevin Sakuda

2015 Overall Record: 14-5-2 **Conference:** 7-3-2 (3rd)

Letterwinners Returning: 18

Starters Returning/Lost: 7/4

Returning Starters: Hannah Huesers (F, Sr., 14 Goals, 3 Assists, GNAC Player of the Year), Emma Holm (M, Sr., 1 Assist, Honorable Mention All-GNAC), Molly Stinson (GK, Jr., 0.81 GAA), Brooke Lancaster (F, So., 2 Goals, 1 Assist), Maddy Booster (D, Jr., 1 Goal, 2 Assists), Haley Ayers (D, Sr., 1 Assist), Maddie Sjothun (D, Jr.)

Key Losses: Isabel Farrell (M), Shayla Page (D), Laura Moore (M), Taylor Hauck (D)

Key Freshmen: Emily Barnett (D, Eugene, Ore. – Churchill), Asia Cayetano (GK, Nampa, Idaho – Nampa Christian), Mason Minder (D, Camas, Wash. – Camas)

SIMON FRASER CLAN

Head Coach: Annie Hamel (Maine, 2004, 9-22-2, 3rd season)

Assistants: Anna Picarelli, Chris Sargeant

2015 Overall Record: 7-6-2 **Conference:** 5-6-1 (T5th)

Letterwinners Returning: 12

Starters Returning/Lost: 10/2

Returning Starters: Christina Dickson (F, So., 7 Goals, 1st Team All-GNAC, GNAC Freshman of the Year), Olivia Aguiar (F, Sr., 4 Goals), Sierra Leung (M, Jr., 1 Goal, 1 Assist), Allyson Dickson (M, So., 1 Goal, 1 Assist), Katelyn Erhardsen (F, So., 4 Goals, 5 Assists, Honorable Mention All-GNAC), Samantha Donald (M, So., 15 Starts), Carli Grosso (D, So., 1 Goal), Teagan Sorokan (D, Sr., 1 Assist, 2nd Team All-GNAC), Teagan McManus (D, So., 10 Starts), Priva Sandhu (GK, Jr., 68 Saves, 1.54 GAA, 6 Shutouts)

Key Losses: Karm Jawanda (M), Brianna Morrison (M),

Key Freshmen: Carmen Brown (M, 5-9, Cave Creek, Ariz. – Cactus Shadow), Emma Lobo (D, 5-3, North Vancouver, B.C. – Windsor), Emma Pringle (M, 5-8, North Vancouver, B.C. – Windsor),

Key Transfers: Jenna Baxter (So., M, 5-3, Surrey B.C. – Oregon State)

WESTERN OREGON WOLVES

Head Coach: Steve Ancheta, Oregon State '91 (23-22-11, 6th Season)

Assistants: Luke Babson

2015 Overall Record: 8-8-1 **Conference:** 4-7-1, (7th)

Letterwinners Returning: 15

Starters Returning/Lost: 3/8

Returning Starters: Mariah Konyn (M, Sr., 1 Goal, 2 Assists), Taylor Higa (M/F, Sr., 2 Goals, 2 Assists), Dani Payn (M, Sr., 1 Goal)

Key Losses: Makana Pundyke (M/F), Vicky Cruz Rosales (M), Dana Goularte (D)

Key Freshmen: Kaili Brundage (M, Battle Ground Wash. – Prairie), Shaelynn Cowles (D, Eugene, Ore. – Churchill), Caitlyn Kastelic (GK, Hillsboro, Ore. – Glencoe)

Key Transfers: Meli Cortez (M, Jr., 5-2, Salem Ore. – Univ. of Idaho)

WESTERN WASHINGTON VIKINGS

Head Coach: Travis Connell (Seattle Pacific, 1996, 178-64-25, 14th season)

Assistants: Claire Morgan, Jamie Arthurs, Joana Houplin

2015 Overall Record: 21-2-1

Conference: 11-0-1 (1st)

Letterwinners Returning: 14

Starters Returning/Lost: 7/5

Returning Starters: Elise Aylward (F, Sr., 6 Goals, 1 Assist, Honorable Mention All-GNAC), Taylor Hallquist (D, So., 18 Starts), Caitlyn Jobanek (M/F, Sr., 7 Goals, 3 Assists, GNAC Tournament MVP, Honorable Mention All-GNAC), Gabriela Pelogi (F, So., 10 Goals, 5 Assists, NCAA Division II All-Tournament Team, Honorable Mention All-GNAC), Erin Russell (D, Sr., 24 Starts), Sierra Shugarts (D, Jr., 24 Starts, 2nd Team All-GNAC), Emily Webster (M, Jr., 3 Goals, 5 Assists, 1st Team All-GNAC)

Key Losses: Ashley Haden (GK), Stephanie Hamilton (F/M), Catherine Miles (F), Savanna Moorehouse (M), Delanee Nilles (D)

Key Freshmen: Jordan Bartelson (F/M, Puyallup, Wash. – Puyallup), Olivia Larson (F/M, Arlington, Wash. – Arlington), Emily Nelson (D, Puyallup, Wash. – Bellarmine Prep)

Key Transfers: Jen Oak (F, So., Covington, Wash. – Whatcom CC), Mariah Roggow (F, So., Kelso, Wash. – Oregon State)

