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## Dances With Wolves: Western Oregon Picked To Capture GNAC Baseball Title

PORTLAND, Ore. – Fresh off its second GNAC Championships title in as many years, Western Oregon has been picked at the top of the 2019 Great Northwest Athletic Conference Baseball Preseason Coaches Poll.

Under the direction of seventh-year head coach **Kellen Walker**, the Wolves received three first-place votes and finished with 33 points in the poll. The team finished last season with a record of 27-21 and outscored its opponents 30-21 in the GNAC Championships to grab its fourth tournament title since its inception in 2013.

Following closely behind WOU is Montana State Billings, the defending GNAC regular season champions. Picked second with 31 points, the Yellowjackets received two first-place votes. Head coach **Aaron Sutton's** team finished in first place last season with a record of 33-18.

Central Washington is picked third with 21 points and one first-place vote, while Concordia was selected fourth (17 points). Rounding out the poll is Northwest Nazarene (13 points) and Saint Martin's (11 points).

For the third straight season, the GNAC Championships will feature four teams after being a three-team tournament prior to the 2017 season. The tournament will be hosted by Concordia on May 8-10 in Portland.

Western Oregon's 2018 campaign ended in what has become a familiar scene for the program - a dogpile at the culmination of the GNAC Championships. Despite struggling to gain momentum early in the season, the club regained its footing and competed at a high level from the month of March onward. It recorded six shutout victories in conference play, ranking No. 19 nationally and doubling the amount of the next-closest GNAC team.

A dominant pitching staff carried WOU throughout the year, leading the conference in earned run average (4.64), opponent batting average (.263) and fewest hits allowed (405). The staff returns three key starters in upperclassmen **Alex Roth**, **Jacob Fricke** and **Gabe Benavides**. A First Team All-GNAC selection a year ago, Roth recorded a 5-1 record and a 3.77 ERA. Fricke (3-2, 4.01 ERA) received Second Team All-GNAC honors while Benavides also won three games in his first season after transferring in from Division I Grand Canyon.

Of the team's 25 returners, five are position starters. That group is led by catcher **Jared McDonald**, a First Team All-GNAC and Honorable Mention NCBWA All-West Region selection a year ago. McDonald finished the 2018 campaign with a .349 batting average while driving in 35 runs.

Montana State Billings (32-18, 29-11 GNAC) finished 2018 on top of the conference standings, giving the program its third regular-season league title in the past four years. A strong 13-3 record in the month of April helped the Yellowjackets lock up the championship prior to

### 2019 GNAC Preseason Baseball Coaches Poll

Team (1st Place Votes)	2018 Record (GNAC)	Pts.
1. Western Oregon (3)	27-21 (24-16, 2nd)	33
2. Montana State Billings (2)	33-18 (29-11, 1st)	31
3. Central Washington (1)	27-26 (21-19, 3rd)	21
4. Concordia	20-32 (19-21, 4th)	17
5. Northwest Nazarene	19-31 (17-23, 5th)	13
6. Saint Martin's	11-37 (11-30, 6th)	11

Votes awarded on an 6-5-4-3-2-1 basis.

the final week of conference play. This year's club will lose five All-GNAC players from that team but does return four position starters and two starting pitchers in addition to bringing in nine transfers.

Now in his third year with MSUB, Sutton will be relying on senior **Steen Fredrickson** (2018 First Team All-GNAC, 4.67 ERA) to bolster a young pitching staff. At the plate, another pair of First Team All-GNAC seniors are back in outfielder **Jalen Garcia** and infielder **Conner Linebarger**. Garcia hit at a .351 clip in 2018 with 51 RBI, while Linebarger wasn't far behind with a .333 average and 44 RBI.

Finishing the regular season in third-place a year ago, Central Washington (27-26, 21-19 GNAC) will look to make it back to the GNAC Championships for a third straight season. The Wildcats lose just two key players from last year's club while returning six starting pitchers and five position starters. Now in his 28th season in Ellensburg, head coach **Desi Storey** will also welcome in a trio of transfers on the mound to bolster his team's pitching staff.

A pair of Honorable Mention All-GNAC honorees are back in outfielder **Justin Hampson** and sophomore **Mitch Lesmeister**. Hampson finished last season with a .327 batting average, while Lesmeister recorded 28 runs and a .294 batting average in his first year at CWU. On the mound, senior **Connor Stevenson** will lead a staff that carries plenty of experience into the 2019 campaign. The right-hander is coming off a season in which he posted a 4.40 ERA with 53 strikeouts.

Concordia (20-32, 19-21 GNAC) finished two games behind Central Washington last season but was able to grab the final berth in the GNAC Championships. A strong end to the regular season saw the Cavaliers clinch that postseason spot with victories in four of their final five games. A total of 21 players are back from that team but the club does lose one of the league's top players in shortstop Andrew Barrera (First Team All-GNAC, NCBWA Second Team All-West Region).

Leading the CU pitching staff in 2019 will be senior **Isaac Mitchum**. The right-hander was a First Team All-GNAC selection a year ago after recording a 3-3 record and a 4.31 ERA. At the plate, a trio of returners in sophomore **Dominic Enbody** and seniors **Trevor Huddleston** and **Jordan Farhat** are back for Concordia. As a freshman last season, Enbody wowed with a .367 batting average.

Picked fifth, Northwest Nazarene (19-31, 17-23 GNAC) brings back six starting pitchers and five position starters from its 2018 roster. Junior second baseman **Parker Price** was a Second Team All-GNAC pick and is the Nighthawks' top returning hitter with a .324 average to go along with 60 hits and 26 RBI. Following closely behind Price is first baseman **Kyle Redford**, who is coming off a junior campaign in which he hit at a .274 clip with 29 RBI. On the mound, seniors **Jesse Hilyard** and **Greg Casper** are back for NNU. Hilyard finished last season with a 3.93 ERA, while Casper (4.84 ERA, 68 strikeouts) held opponents to a .212 average.

Rounding out the poll, Saint Martin's (11-37, 11-30 GNAC) will turn to a bevy of experienced players to lead the program back to the GNAC Championships for the first time since 2014. The Saints welcome back 22 players from the 2018 club and will look to a pair of key transfers and incoming freshman to aid in those efforts. Leading the bunch is senior **Austin Feist**, who is coming off a season in which he garnered First Team All-GNAC honors. The outfielder led SMU with a .320 batting average along with 30 RBI and six home runs a year ago.

The 2019 campaign begins on Friday, February 1 with Central Washington, Saint Martin's and Concordia all lifting the lid on opening day. Conference play will start on Friday, March 1 when Northwest Nazarene travels to Portland to face the Cavaliers.

**Team Capsules Follow On Next Page**



## 2019 GNAC Baseball Teams At A Glance

### CENTRAL WASHINGTON

**Head Coach:** Desi Storey (Central Washington 1994, 610-670-1, 28th Season)

**Assistant Coaches:** Ken Wilson, Kellen Camus

**2018 Overall Record:** 27-26 **GNAC Record (Finish):** 21-19 (3rd, 1-2 at GNAC Championships)

**Total Returners:** 16 **Total Returning Position Starters:** 5 **Total Returning Starting Pitchers:** 6

**Key Returners:** Justin Hampson (OF, L/R, 6-0, Jr., Mill Creek, Wash., Honorable Mention All-GNAC, 48 GP, .327 Batting Avg., 51 Hits, 36 Runs, 8 2B, 3 3B, 25 RBI, .411 On Base Pct., .991 Fielding Pct.), Mitch Lesmeister (IF, R/R, 6-0, So., Walla Walla, Wash., Honorable Mention All-GNAC, 42 GP, .294 Batting Avg., 40 Hits, 28 Runs, 5 2B, 2 3B, 2 HR, 4/4 SB), Connor Stevenson (P, R/R, 5-11, Sr., Stevenson, Wash., 14 GP, 5-6, 4.40 ERA, 75.2 IP, 53 Runs, 37 ER, 93 Hits, 53 K, .291 Opponent Avg.).

**Key Losses:** James Smith III (OF, First Team All-GNAC, GNAC Player of the Year, ABCA & D2CCA First Team All-West Region, NCBWA Second Team All-West Region), Dustin Braun (1B/DH, First Team All-GNAC, NCBWA First Team All-West Region, D2CCA Second Team All-West Region).

**Top Freshmen:** Trevor Tripoli (IF, R/R, 5-8, Mililani, Hawaii – University Lab).

**Top Transfers:** Ryan Marsteller (P, R/R, 6-1, Jr., Denver, Colo. – McCook CC), Colton Turner (P, R/R, 5-11, Jr., Olympia, Wash. – Centralia CC), AJ Wood (P, R/R, 6-3, Jr., Sacramento, Calif. – Cosumnes River Coll.).

### CONCORDIA

**Head Coach:** Rob Vance (Pacific (Ore.), 1987, 413-571, 21st Season)

**Assistant Coaches:** Jeff Bard, Garrett DeGalliler, James Threw **Graduate Assistants:** Gehrett Moser, Reid Penney

**2018 Overall Record:** 20-32 **GNAC Record (Finish):** 19-21 (4th, 0-2 at GNAC Championships)

**Total Returners:** 21 **Total Returning Position Starters:** 5 **Total Returning Starting Pitchers:** 4

**Key Returners:** Isaac Mitchum (P, R/R, 5-11, Sr., Cowiche, Wash., First Team All-GNAC, 15 GP, 3-3, 4.31 ERA, 1 Save, 62.2 IP, 41 Runs, 30 ER, 81 Hits, 43 K), Dylan Diaz (P, R/R, 6-3, So., Glendora, Calif., 17 GP, 2-5, 6.42 ERA, 4 Saves, 40.2 IP, 36 Runs, 29 ER, 51 Hits, 37 K), Kaleb Jones (P, R/R, 5-11, Sr., Twin Falls, Idaho, Honorable Mention All-GNAC, 13 GP, 5-4, 4.99 ERA, 61.1 IP, 37 Runs, 34 ER, 73 Hits, 30 K), Jake Roes (P, L/L, 6-0, Sr., Kent, Wash., 13 GP, 2-6, 4.35 ERA, 70.1 IP, 53 Runs, 34 ER, 82 Hits, 39 K, .293 Opponent Avg.), Trevor Huddleston (P/OF, R/L, 5-10, Sr., Woodland, Wash., 13 GP, 2-6, 5.72 ERA, 56.2 IP, 39 Runs, 36 ER, 55 Hits, 40 K, .256 Opponent Avg.; Hitting: 31 GP, 235 Batting Avg., 23 Hits, 16 Runs, 6 2B, 6 RBI), Jordan Farhat (IF, R/R, 5-10, Sr., Ramona, Calif., 47 GP, .220 Batting Avg., 28 Hits, 16 Runs, 5 2B, 16 RBI, 26 BB), Dominic Enbody (C, L/R, 6-2, So., Wilsonville, Ore., 27 GP, .367 Batting Avg., 22 Hits, 7 Runs, 5 2B, 2 3B, 13 RBI, .517 Slugging Pct.).

**Key Losses:** Andrew Barrera (SS, First Team All-GNAC, NCBWA Second Team All-West Region), Kyle Henderson (C, Honorable Mention All-GNAC), Cole Crosby (OF, Honorable Mention All-GNAC), Tanner Williams (OF).

**Top Freshmen:** Tyler Pruitt (IF, R/R, 6-2, Peoria, Ariz. – Sunrise Mountain), Dupree Simmons (IF, R/R, 5-11, Duarte, Calif. – Northview), Tyler White (UT, R/R, 6-0, Rancho Murrieta, Calif. – Jesuit), Isaac Lovings (C, R/R, 6-0, Beaverton, Ore. – Sunset).

**Top Transfers:** Liam Knowles (IF, L/R, 6-5, Jr., Albany, Calif. – Laney Coll.), Garrett Smith (P, R/R, 6-2, Jr., Gig Harbor, Wash. – Univ. of Texas-Rio Grande Valley), Ryan Gibson (P/IF, R/R, 6-0, Jr., Fremont, Calif. – Laney Coll.), Damon Peters (IF, R/R, 5-11, Jr., Cornelius, Ore. – Linn Benton CC), Jared Akin (P, R/R, 6-4, Jr., Hillsboro, Ore. – Lower Columbia CC).

## 2019 GNAC BASEBALL TEAMS AT A GLANCE

### MONTANA STATE BILLINGS

**Head Coach:** Aaron Sutton (Western Oregon 2008, 56-47, 3rd Season, 7th Season Overall, 195-108)

**Assistant Coaches:** Ryan Wright, Grant Hamilton, Matt Hape

**2018 Overall Record:** 33-18     **GNAC Record (Finish):** 29-11 (1st, Lost in GNAC Championships Final)

**Total Returners:** 19

**Total Returning Position Starters:** 4

**Total Returning Starting Pitchers:** 2

**Key Returners:** Jalen Garcia (OF, R/R, 6-0, Sr., Billings, Mont., First Team All-GNAC, Second Team NCBWA All-West Region, 47 GP, .351 Batting Avg., 71 Hits, 54 Runs, 20 2B, 7 3B, 9 HR, .653 Slugging Pct., 25/29 SB), Conner Linebarger (IF, L/R, 6-2, Sr., Bozeman, Mont., First Team All-GNAC, 50 GP, .333 Batting Avg., 62 Hits, 44 Runs, 11 2B, 3 3B, 6 HR, 44 RBI, .522 Slugging Pct.), Andrew Schleusner (C, R/R, 5-11, Jr., Kalispell, Mont., Second Team All-GNAC, 48 GP, .325 Batting Avg., 53 Hits, 29 Runs, 13 2B, 4 HR, 38 RBI, .491 Slugging Pct., .491 Slugging Pct., 6/6 SB), Wyatt Setian (SS, R/R, 5-10, So., Post Falls, Idaho, Second Team All-GNAC, 47 GP, .229 Batting Avg., 33 Hits, 30 Runs, 7 2B, 4 HR), Steen Fredrickson (P, R/R, 6-1, Sr., Ashland, Ore., GNAC Co-Pitcher of the Year, First Team All-GNAC, Honorable Mention NCBWA All-West Region, 13 GP, 7-1, 4.67 ERA, 69.1 IP, 42 Runs, 36 ER, 68 Hits, 70 K, .252 Opponent Avg.), Jared Winslow (P, L/R, 6-1, Sr., Libby, Mont., Honorable Mention All-GNAC, 13 GP, 5-3, 5.71 ERA, 52 IP, 43 Runs, 33 ER, 58 Hits, 36 K).

**Key Losses:** Kaleo Johnson (3B, GNAC Newcomer of the Year, First Team All-GNAC, First Team All-West Region (D2CCA, ABCA & NCBWA), NCBWA & D2CCA Second Team All-American, Third Team ABCA All-American), Adam Cox (RHP, First Team All-GNAC), Ryan Myers (1B, First Team All-GNAC, ABCA Second Team All-West Region), Kade Hall (LF, Second Team All-GNAC), Hayden Humphrey (DH, Second Team All-GNAC), Tristan Shockley (RHP, Honorable Mention All-GNAC).

**Top Freshmen:** Dylan Johnson (UT, R/R, 5-10, Billings, Mont. – Billings West), Alex McFarland-Smith (1B, R/R, 6-2, Boise, Idaho – Timberline), Brooks Zimmer (P, R/R, 6-6, Billings, Mont. – Billings Senior).

**Top Transfers:** Chris Arpan (3B, R/R, 6-3, Jr., Lake Oswego, Ore. – Univ. of Portland), Tyler Detloff (OF, R/R, 6-1, Jr., Kennewick, Wash. – Yakima Valley CC), Cole Jones (OF/P, R/R, 5-9, Jr., Billings, Mont. – Clarke Univ.), Brandon Koszuth (3B/1B, L/R, 6-1, Jr., Sparks, Nev. – Feather River JC), Sam Powers (OF/IF, R/R, 6-0, Jr., Las Vegas, Nev. – South Mountain CC), Will Heward (P, R/R, 5-10, Jr., Ogden, Utah – Washington State Univ.), Sterling Lay (P, L/L, 6-1, Jr., Livingston, Mont. – Salt Lake City CC), Keven Mackintosh (P, L/L, 6-1, Jr., Aurora, Colo. – Lamar CC), Jarrod Molnaa (P, R/R, 6-3, Sr., Kennewick, Wash. – Bellevue Univ.).

### NORTHWEST NAZARENE

**Head Coach:** Joe Schaefer (Point Loma, 2003, First Season, 11th Season Overall, 341-217)

**Assistant Coaches:** Matt Hollod, Billy Newberry, Sean Rooney

**2018 Overall Record:** 19-31     **GNAC Record (Finish):** 17-23 (5th)

**Total Returners:** 22

**Total Returning Position Starters:** 5

**Total Returning Starting Pitchers:** 6

**Key Returners:** Parker Price (2B, R/R, 5-10, Jr., Boise, Idaho, Second Team All-GNAC, 50 GP, .324 Batting Avg., 60 Hits, 42 Runs, 13 2B, 26 RBI, .405 Slugging Pct., 12/14 SB), Kyle Redford (1B, R/R, 6-2, Sr., Meridian, Idaho, 50 GP, .274 Batting Avg., 49 Hits, 30 Runs, 9 2B, 5 HR, 29 RBI, .419 Slugging Pct., 13/15 SB, 21 BB), Dylan Cure (C, R/R, 6-0, Sr., Fort Worth, Texas, 39 GP, .286 Batting Avg., 32 Hits, 17 Runs, 5 2B, 3 HR, .411 Slugging Pct.), Bennett Tabaracci (CF, R/R, 6-2, Sr., Helena, Mont., 43 GP, .297 Batting Avg., 33 Hits, 21 Runs, 6 2B, 15 RBI), Jesse Hilyard (OF/P, R/R, 6-3, Sr., Klamath Falls, Ore., 42 GP, .255 Batting Avg., 35 Hits, 20 Runs, 7 2B, 7 HR, 22 RBI, .489 Slugging Pct.; Pitching: 1-3, 3.93 ERA, 34.1 IP, 20 Runs, 15 ER, 41 Hits, 26 K), Greg Casper (P, R/R, 6-0, Sr., Pocatello, Idaho, 14 GP, 4-4, 4.84 ERA, 57.2 IP, 37 Runs, 31 ER, 57.2 IP, 46 Hits, 68 K, .212 Opponent Avg.), Cooper Webster (P, R/R, 5-10, Sr., Portland, Ore., 17 GP, 3-4, 6.00 ERA, 51 IP, 41 Runs, 34 ER, 67 Hits, 42 K), Blake McFadden (P, L/L, 6-3, Jr., Meridian, Idaho, 17 GP, 3-2, 5.00 ERA, 45 IP, 31 Runs, 25 ER, 53 Hits, 32 K, .291 Opponent Avg.).

**Key Losses:** Casey Sheehan (OF, Second Team All-GNAC), Zach Penrod (OF, Second Team All-GNAC), Justin Folz (3B, Second Team All-GNAC), Adam Paulson (P, First Team All-GNAC), Ross Clevenger (P).

**Top Freshmen:** Nick Irwin (P, R/R, 6-0, Kennewick, Wash. – Kamiakin), Nathan Cassara (OF, R/R, 5-10, Cave Creek, Ariz. – Shadow Mountain), Caleb Martinez (P, R/R, 6-0, Longmont, Colo. – Niwot).

**Top Transfers:** Shawn Grandmont (3B, R/R, 6-1, Jr., Lethbridge, Alta. – Coll. Of Southern Idaho), Jonathan Ringer (P, L/L, 6-1, Jr., Darby, Mont. – Miles City CC), Bailey Daguio (P, R/R, 6-3, Jr., Las Vegas, Nev. – Coll. Of Southern Idaho), Ryan Berry (OF, R/R, 6-0, Jr., Phoenix, Ariz. – Gateway CC).

### SAINT MARTIN'S

**Head Coach:** Kelly Gau (Central Washington, 2011, 2nd Season, 8-22)

**Assistant Coaches:** Joey Swanson, Cole Brocker, Andy Forgione

**2018 Overall Record:** 11-37     **GNAC Record (Finish):** 11-30 (6th)

**Total Returners:** 22

**Total Returning Position Starters:** 13

**Total Returning Starting Pitchers:** 9

**Key Returners:** Austin Feist (OF, R/R, 6-2, Sr., Burns, Ore., First Team All-GNAC, 48 GP, .320 Batting Avg., 57 Hits, 31 Runs, 12 2B, 2 3B, 6 HR, 30 RBI, .511 Slugging Pct.), Ryne Oshiro (IF, L/R, 6-0, So., Aiea, Hawaii, Second Team All-GNAC, 48 GP, .328 Batting Avg., 57 Hits, 35 Runs, 5 2B, 2 3B, 3 HR, 19 RBI, .481 Slugging Pct.), Tanner Inouye (P, R/R, 6-0, Jr., Honolulu, Hawaii, Honorable Mention All-GNAC, 14 GP, 2-5, 5.75 ERA, 51.2 IP, 42 Runs, 33 ER, 37 K), Clark Streby (P, 6-6, Sr., Selah, Wash., 12 GP, 4-4, 6.83 ERA, 56.2 IP, 47 Runs, 43 ER, 85 Hits, 50 K).

**Key Losses:** Adam Eskil (P/IF), Steven Sordahl (OF).

**Top Freshmen:** Lukas Hemenway (OF, L/R, 5-10, Bellingham, Wash. – Meridian), Aaron Renuad (IF, L/R, 5-10, Lihue, Hawaii – Saint Louis).

**Top Transfers:** Garret Friesz (IF, R/R, 6-0, Jr., Rainier, Wash. – Blue Mountain CC), Elijah Santiago (OF, R/R, 5-9, Jr., Mukilteo, Wash. – Edmonds CC).

## 2019 GNAC BASEBALL TEAMS AT A GLANCE

### WESTERN OREGON

**Head Coach:** Kellen Walker (Point Loma 2006, 182-124, 7th Season)

**Assistant Coaches:** Mike McInerney, Miles Kizer, Boog Leach, Shawn Domke

**2018 Overall Record:** 27-21    **GNAC Record (Finish):** 25-16 (2nd, Won GNAC Championships)

**Total Returners:** 25

**Total Returning Position Starters:** 5

**Total Returning Starting Pitchers:** 4

**Key Returners:** Alex Roth (P, R/R, 6-5, Jr., Peoria, Ariz., First Team All-GNAC, 5-1, 3.77 ERA, 57.1 IP, 24 Runs, 56 Hits, 58 K, .253 Opponent Batting Avg.), Jacob Fricke (P, L/L, 6-4, Sr., Glide, Ore., Second Team All-GNAC, 3-2, 4.01 ERA, 51.2 IP, 27 Runs, 23 ER, 55 Hits, 32 K), Gabe Benavides (P, L/L, 6-1, Sr., Tucson, Ariz., 3-4, 4.45 ERA, 58.2 IP, 38 Runs, 29 ER, 61 Hits, 45 K), Jared McDonald (C, R/R, 6-5, Sr. Phoenix, Ariz., First Team All-GNAC, Honorable Mention NCBWA All-West Region, 47 GP, .349 Batting Avg., 58 Hits, 32 Runs, 15 2B, 9 HR, 35 RBI, .602 Slugging Pct.), Connor McCord (P/IF, L/L, 5-9, Jr., Gilbert, Ariz., Second Team All-GNAC, 46 GP, .306 Batting Avg., 53 Hits, 37 Runs, 11 2B, 11 HR, 48 RBI, .572 Slugging Pct.; Pitching: 1-4, 6.59 ERA, 28.2 IP, 25 Runs, 21 ER, 34 Hits, 21 K), Griffey Halle (OF, R/R, 6-1, Sr., East Wenatchee, Wash., Honorable Mention All-GNAC, 46 GP, .312 Batting Avg., 48 Hits, 30 Runs, 10 2B, 5 HR, .487 Slugging Pct., 11/16 SB).

**Key Losses:** Jacob Martinez (OF, First Team All-GNAC), Jay Leverett (IF, First Team All-GNAC, Second Team NCBWA All-West Region), Cody Dykstra (OF, Honorable Mention All-GNAC), Nyles Nygaard (IF, Second Team All-GNAC), Jake Simmons (P, Honorable Mention All-GNAC).

**Top Freshmen:** Derek Maiben (IF, R/R, Newberg, Ore. – Newberg), Jacob Maiben (OF, R/R, Newberg, Ore. – Newberg).

**Top Transfers:** Patrick Chung (IF, L/R, Sr., Everett, Wash. – Gonzaga Univ.), Collin Runge (IF/C, R/R, Sr., Redmond, Ore. – Scottsdale CC), Austin Crowson (P, L/L, Jr., Monroe, Ore. – Lane CC).