



## Great Northwest Athletic Conference

6901 SE Lake Rd.  
Suite 1  
Portland, OR 97267-2194  
503.305.8756

Contact: Bob Guptill

### 2013 GNAC Baseball Preview (Jan. 29, 2013)

| Great Northwest Coaches Poll | 2012 Records                      | Pts |
|------------------------------|-----------------------------------|-----|
| 1. Western Oregon (3)        | 40-11, 29-3 (1 <sup>st</sup> )    | 21  |
| 2. Central Washington (1)    | 19-31, 11-21 (4 <sup>th</sup> -T) | 20  |
| 3. Northwest Nazarene (1)    | 27-22, 16-16 (2 <sup>nd</sup> )   | 14  |
| 4. Montana State Billings    | 22-24, 13-19 (3 <sup>rd</sup> )   | 12  |
| 5. Saint Martin's            | 15-35, 11-21 (4 <sup>th</sup> -T) | 8   |

(Note: First-place votes in parenthesis. Points awarded on a 5-4-3-2-1 basis.)

PORTLAND, Ore. - Western Oregon has dominated baseball in the Great Northwest Athletic Conference since the league's inception.

The Wolves will be gunning for their 12<sup>th</sup> consecutive GNAC title (and their 13<sup>th</sup> overall) this spring and once again are the coaches' pre-season favorites.

WOU received three of five first-place votes to edge Central Washington by one point in the coaches' pre-season poll.

It is the second year in a row, WOU's margin in the pre-season poll has been just a single point.

Last year, Western Oregon edged Northwest Nazarene in the balloting and then went on to post a 29-3 conference record and win the race by a GNAC-record 13 games.

This year the Crusaders, who along with CWU received one first-place vote, came in third in the balloting. Montana State Billings and Saint Martin's finished fourth and fifth, respectively.

WOU has never lost more than eight conference games in any season and has an all-time GNAC record of 247-53, a .823 winning margin.

Two coaches have guided the Wolves to their previous 11 titles – Terry Baumgartner won the first four (2002-05) prior to handing off the reigns to Jeremiah Robbins who won the next seven.

With Robbins now at Lewis-Clark State, Kellen Walker will try to keep the dynasty going this spring.

This year's race could conceivably be the closest since WOU finished just two games ahead of Saint Martin's in 2004.

The Wolves return the fewest number of starters of any team in the conference with just three.

WOU, however, does have two returning first-team all-conference performers including consensus All-American shortstop Blake Miller.

Miller (6-2, 195, Sr., Salem, OR – South Salem) won the GNAC batting title last year batting .410, preventing teammate Bo Folklinga who finished second with a .384 average and led the conference in home runs (13) and RBI (68), from winning the Triple Crown.

Miller also led the conference in runs scored (61) and hits (80).

Also back for WOU is outfielder Matt Nysten (6-2, 205, Sr., Damascus, OR – Clackamas), who hit .318 and had four home runs and 41 RBI in earning first team honors.

Only two other returning GNAC players were first team selections in 2012 – Saint Martin's catcher Chandler Tracy (6-2, 215, So., Newcastle, WA – Liberty) and Saint infielder Mario Sanelli (6-0, 185, Sr., Issaquah, WA).

Tracy hit .329 finishing ninth in the batting race in earning *GNAC Freshman of the Year* honors.

He also finished third in home runs with eight and tied for fifth with CWU catcher Kyle Sani in RBI with 39 and was a first team NCBWA West Region selection.

Three returnees were second team picks – Central Washington outfielder Jimmy Ryerson (5-11, 175, Sr., Seattle, WA – Roosevelt), MSU Billings shortstop Colby Robison (6-1, 190, Sr., Rexburg, ID) and Yellowjacket pitcher Samuel Paterson (5-9, 165, Sr., McMinnville, OR).

Ryerson batted .292, while Robison hit .302. Paterson ranked fourth in the GNAC in earned run average (4.21) though he won just two of nine decisions.

The only other returning starter pitcher with an ERA below 5.00 a year ago is MSUB's Brady Muller (6-1, 165, So., Billings, MT – Billings West), who won five of eight decisions and had a 4.84 ERA.

Western Oregon graduated all four of its starting pitchers, including two – Grady Wood (12-0, 1.69) and Jason Wilson (5-2, 4.65) – who were drafted in the Major League Baseball free agent draft.

They were among four GNAC pitchers taken in the draft along with Brandon Rohde of Central Washington (6-3, 4.81) and Zeb Sneed of Northwest Nazarene (7-4, 5.00).

The Wolves do return their top reliever in AJ Burke (6-3, 210, Sr., Hillsboro, OR – Glencoe), who posted a 3-0 record, had four saves and had a 2.25 earned run average.

However, Burke, who made four starts, is the only returning pitcher on the WOU staff who threw more than 15 innings. Only one other returnee – Zach Nuno (6-2, 175, Sr., Laguna Beach, CA) – made a start.

Western Oregon, however, did add New Mexico State transfer Taylor Hetrick (6-3, 220, So., Lacey, WA), who pitched two innings for the Aggies in 2011.

In addition to Miller and Nylen, Walker also has available second baseman Michael Gange (5-6, 150, Sr., Marysville, WA – Pilchuck), who hit .338 though with just 71 official at bats didn't have enough plate appearances to qualify for the batting race.

The loss of Folkinga left a big hole at first base, which could be filled by Hawaii Hilo transfer Josh Wong (6-1, 185, Sr., Mililani, HI - Kamehameha).

Wong was a three-year starter at UHH, batting .278 and driving in 51 runs in his three seasons.

Other returning players who played a significant role on last year's championship team for the Wolves include second baseman Josh Solemsaas (5-9, Jr., Lake Stevens, WA) and catcher Scott David (6-1, 205, Sr., Pleasanton, CA – Amador Valley).

Solemsaas hit .284 in 67 at bats, while David batted .265 in 83 at bats.

Central Washington tied for fourth last year, but added nine junior college all-stars including four first team selections.

Among the JC first team all-stars is Yakima Valley shortstop Justen Weigel (5-10, 180, Jr., Naches), who batted .352 and drove in 16 runs in earning NWACC East Region MVP honors.

The Wildcats also added YVCC pitcher Jake Fife, Lower Columbia catcher Sam Williams and third baseman Marc Garza.

Fife (5-9, 185, Jr., Selah, WA) posted an 8-2 record and a 1.71 ERA in earning first team East Region honors, while Williams (6-0, 190, Jr., Seattle, WA – Blanchet) hit .344 and drove in 25 runs and was a Western Region first team selection.

Garza (6-0, 205, Sr., Othello, WA) earned NWAAC first team honors at Walla Walla in 2011 before playing last season at NAIA Campbellsville where he hit .307 and drove in 18 runs.

Pitcher Tyler Roberts (5-10, 195, Sr., Kennewick, WA – Southridge) also played at WWCC and then last season at Campbellsville winning two of five decisions and posting a 4.45 ERA.

Five more players were second team NWAACC all-stars – shortstop Joel Johnson (6-1, 175, Jr., Olympia, WA) from Clark, second baseman J.V. Estella (5-8, 200, Jr., Marysville, WA – Pilchuck) from Everett and pitchers Skye Adams (6-0, 195, Jr., Vancouver, WA – Columbia River) from Edmonds, Joe Arlt (6-3, 205, Jr., Spokane, WA – Central Valley) from Walla Walla and Stuart Fewel (6-5, 225, Jr., Portland, OR – Wilson) from Lower Columbia.

The newcomers join five returning starters led by Ryerson, Sani, who batted .322 and hit a team-high six home runs, outfielder Ethan Sterkel (6-2, 210, Jr., Ellensburg, WA) who batted .296 and pitchers Jason Lotzer (6-3, 205, Sr., Lynnwood, WA) and Randy Button (6-3, 195, Sr., Allyn, WA – North Mason).

Sani and Sterkel were honorable mention GNAC all-conference selections. Lotzer (3-5, 5.98) and Button (4-2, 6.12) were CWU's No. 3 and No. 4 starters last season in back of Rohde and Kyle Long (4-6, 5.77).

Northwest Nazarene returns six starters including four of last year's Top 20 GNAC hitters.

Catcher-outfielder Charlie Gorzo (6-1, 205, Sr., Murrietta, CA – Vista Murrietta) ranked seventh in hitting with a .351 average and tied for the team lead in stolen bases with 10. He also hit five home runs and drove in 26 runs.

Third baseman Kaleb DeHaas (5-11, 200, So., Coeur d'Alene, ID) batted .312, ranking 15<sup>th</sup> in the GNAC, while outfielder Logan Parker (5-11, 190, Jr., Jerome, ID) ranked 18<sup>th</sup> with a .301 average and infielder Fernando Robles (6-1, 180, Sr., Caldwell, ID) finished 20<sup>th</sup> in the batting race with a .296 average.

Gorzo, DeHaas and Parker were all honorable mention GNAC selections as was catcher Jamie Mitchell (6-0, 205, Sr., Calgary, AB – Bowness), who batted .260.

NNU's top returning pitcher is Aaron Vaughan (5-11, 185, Jr., Tucson, AZ – Pusch Ridge Christian), who made just five starts, but still tossed 54.1 innings finishing third in the conference in ERA (3.64) the lowest among returning players.

In 21 appearances, 16 in relief, Vaughan had a 4-3 record and earned five saves.

Three other pitchers made double-digit appearances – Nate Forseth (6-7, 200, So., Nampa, ID, 1.65 ERA in 16 1/3 innings), Barrett Nielsen (6-3, 190, Jr., Wilkie, SK) 4.67 in 17 1/3 innings) and Jeremy Burk (5-11, 175, Sr., Hanford, WA, 5.06 in 16 innings).

The Crusaders also added Andrew Groves (5-11, 185, So., Mukilteo, WA - Kamiak), who had a 4-1 record and 2.23 ERA at Bellevue CC in 2011.

Another former JC standout for the Crusaders is utility player Barak Frank (5-10, 175, Jr., Minico, ID), who hit .313 at Grays Harbor in 2011.

Montana State Billings returns a league-best nine returning starters, including five who earned all-conference honors. That's the most of any team in the GNAC.

Three of MSUB's top four hitters are among the returnees led by Robison, who hit .302 and had a team-high 25 RBI, and Brody Miller (5-8, 165, So., Missoula, MT – Sentinel), who started all 46 games and battled .288. He drove in 24 runs.

First baseman-catcher Blake Loran (6-0, 200, Jr., Billings, MT) hit .333 and had 21 RBI in earning honorable mention all-league honors.

Other position starters back are designated hitter Mack Unruh (6-0, 180, Sr., Salem, OR, .273, 0 hr, 12 rbi) and outfielders Justin Harcharik (5-11, 175, Sr., Butte, MT, .244, 0 hr, 5 rbi) and Austin Rue (5-9, 160, Sr., Clancy, MT, .227, 1 hr, 9 rbi).

Four MSUB pitchers earned all-league recognition last year – Paterson, Brady Muller (6-1, 165, So., Billings, MT – West), Matt Eames (6-4, 200, Sr., Billings, MT) and reliever Bobby Ragasa (5-9, 190, Sr., Milwaukie, OR).

Muller (5-3, 4.84), Eames (3-3, 5.27) and Ragasa (4-1, 4 saves, 2.91 ERA) were all honorable mention selections.

Two Division I transfers and a JC all-star are among MSUB's newcomers.

Catcher-outfielder Drew Fosnes (6-0, 185, Jr., Woodinville, WA) was a second team NWAACC selection at Green River.

Catcher Dana Hill (6-0, 185, So., Rapid City, SD) played two games at North Dakota State, while pitcher Kole Mickolio (6-5, 220, Sr., Bozeman, MT) had a 1-0 record in nine innings at Utah Valley State.

Saint Martin's has a league-best 18 returning letter winners, led by Tracy and Sanelli.

Also back from last year's starting lineup are infielder Bobby Twedt (5-10, 180, Sr., Sedro-Woolley, WA) who started 50 games including 38 at third base and 10 at second, outfielder Travis Shaw (5-11, 180, So., Mililani, HI – Saint Louis) who started 15 games in the outfield and 16 at first and first baseman Spencer Dodd (6-1, 195, Jr., Eagle, ID)

Twedt batted .279 and drove in 20 runs a year ago, while Shaw hit .238 and had 16 RBI and Dodd, who made 32 starts, hit .208 and drove in 10 runs.

The top returning pitcher for the Saints is Zach Carter who led the team in wins with five and had two saves. Carter (6-0, 185, So., Camas, WA) pitched in 24 games, all but two in relief and had a 4.50 ERA in 44 innings.

Only three other hurlers pitched 15 or more innings – Chase DeCoito (6-0, 200, So., Kapolei, HI) had a 0-1

record and a 8.58 ERA in 19 appearances covering 28 1/3 innings.

Brad Banker (6-0, 180, So., Alamo, CA – Monte Vista) pitched in 22 1/3 innings over 19 appearances and had a 10.07 ERA, winning his only decision.

Josh Moss (6-1, 230, So., Tenino, WA – Rochester) posted a 2-4 record in 22 appearances, including four starters and had a 13.86 ERA in 25 1/3 innings.

Among the newcomers from the Saints is outfielder Chris Womac (6-0, 175, Jr., Olympia, WA) who played at Green River CC.

### Season Begins February 1 in California

Northwest Nazarene, Saint Martin's and Western Oregon open their 2013 seasons Friday in California.

The Crusaders have a doubleheader Friday at Holy Names to open up a four-game series.

The Saints play a single game to begin a four-game series with Cal Poly Pomona, while the Wolves open a four-game set with Cal State Stanislaus.

Central Washington also heads to California for eight games beginning with a four-game series with Cal State East Bay on Sunday. The Wildcats will also play four games at Cal State Monterey Bay.

Montana State Billings opens its season Feb. 7 competing in the Metrodome Classic in Minneapolis.

Conference play begins the first weekend in March with Central Washington visiting Northwest Nazarene Mar. 1-2 and Montana State Billings playing at Western Oregon Mar. 2-3.

Saint Martin's opens its conference season Mar. 9-10 hosting Montana State Billings.

## TEAM CAPSULES

### WESTERN OREGON Wolves

**Head Coach:** Kellen Walker, Point Loma Nazarene '06 (First year)

**Assistants:** Miles Kizer, Mike McInerney

**2012 Record:** 40-11

**Conference:** 29-3, 1st

**Returning Letter Winners:** 16

**Returning Starters (3 position):** Blake Miller (SS, 6-2, 195, Sr., .410, 6 hr, 48 rbi, 1<sup>st</sup> team GNAC); Matt Nylen (OF, 6-2, 205, Sr., .318, 4 hr, 41 rbi, 1<sup>st</sup> team GNAC); Michael Gange (2B, 5-6, 150, Sr., .338, 2 hr, 13 rbi)

**Key Returnees (25 or more at bats, 15 or more IP):** AJ Burke (P, 6-3, 210, Sr., 3-0, 4 saves, 2.25 ERA, HM GNAC); Garrett Harpole (3B, 6-1, 190, So., .308, 2 hr, 12 rbi); Josh Solemsaas

(2B, 5-9, 165, Jr., .284, 1 hr, 6 rbi); Scott David (C, 6-1, 205, Sr., .265, 0 hr, 12 rbi); Vince Ampi (OF, 6-1, 205, Jr., .147, 2 hr, 6 rbi)  
**Top Transfers:** Josh Wong (1B, 6-1, 185, Sr., Mililani, HI – Kamehameha, 3-year starter at Hawaii Hilo, .278 career average, 2 hr, 51 rbi); Taylor Hetrick (P, 6-3, 220, So., Lacey, WA – New Mexico State, pitched in 2 innings in 2011)

### **CENTRAL WASHINGTON Wildcats**

**Head Coach:** Desi Storey, Central Washington '94 (441-531-1, 21 years)

**Assistants:** Ken Wilson, Rob Hippi, Scott Wilson, Craig Driver

**2012 Record:** 19-31

**Conference:** 11-21, 4th-T

**Returning Letter Winners:** 8 (1 from 2011)

**Returning Starters (3 position, 2 pitchers):** Jimmy Ryerson (OF, 5-11, 175, Sr., .292, 4 hr, 29 rbi, 2<sup>nd</sup> team GNAC); Kyle Sani (C, 6-1, 240, Sr., .322, 6 hr, 39 rbi, HM GNAC); Ethan Sterkel (OF, 6-2, 210, Jr., .296, 3 hr, 23 rbi, HM GNAC); Jason Lotzer (P, 6-3, 205, Sr., 3-5, 5.98); Randy Button (P, 6-3, 195, Sr., 4-2, 6.12)

**Key Returnees (25 or more at bats, 15 or more IP):** Kasey Bielec (2B-C, 5-11, 205, So., .255, 0 hr, 6 rbi); Daniel Kathman (C, 5-9, 195, Sr., .379, 0 hr, 5 rbi in 2011); \*Brett Gray (1B, 6-2, 220, Sr., .294, 1 hr, 13 rbi) \*Probable redshirt

**Top Transfers:** Justen Weigel (SS, 5-10, 180, Jr., Naches – Yakima Valley, MVP NWAACC East Region, .352, 1 hr, 16 rbi); Jack Fife (P, 5-9, 185, Jr., Selah – Yakima Valley, 1<sup>st</sup> team NWAACC, 8-2, 1.71 ERA); Sam Williams (C, 6-0, 190, Jr., Seattle, WA – LCC, 1<sup>st</sup> team NWAACC, .344, 1 hr, 25 rbi); Marc Garza (3B, 6-0, 205, Sr., Othello, WA – Campbellsville, .307, 2 hr, 18 rbi, 1<sup>st</sup> NWAACC at WWCC in 2011); Joel Johnson (SS, 6-1, 175, Jr., Olympia, WA – Clark, 2<sup>nd</sup> team NWAACC in 2011, .276, 0 hr, 11 rbi); J.V. Estella (2B, 5-8, 200, Jr., Marysville, WA – Everett CC, 2<sup>nd</sup> team NWAACC, .325, 2 hr, 22 rbi); Skye Adams (P, 6-0, 195, Jr., Vancouver, WA – Edmonds CC, 2<sup>nd</sup> team NWACC, 4-2, 3.55 ERA); Joe Art (P, 6-3, 205, Jr., Spokane, WA – Walla Walla, 2<sup>nd</sup> team NWAACC, 3-3, 1.76 ERA); Stuart Fewel (P, 6-5, 225, Jr., Portland, OR – Lower Columbia, 2<sup>nd</sup> team NWAACC, 4-4, 2.43 ERA); Tyler Roberts (P, 5-10, 195, Sr., Kennewick, WA – Campbellsville, 2-3, 4.45 ERA); Eddie Malone (1B, 6-0, 200, Jr., Queen Creek, AZ – Mesa CC, .343); Justin Peterson (1B, 6-4, 230, Sr., Tacoma, WA – Western Oregon, .292, 1 hr, 7 rbi in 2011); Mike Davalos (OF, 5-11, 185, So., Apache Junction, AZ – Mesa CC, .378 in 2011)

### **NORTHWEST NAZARENE Crusaders**

**Head Coach:** Tim Onofrei, Albertson '98 (243-302, 11 years)

**Assistants:** Skyler Mantz, Tyler Grant, Jaime May, Mitch Kochis, Keith Vanderhoof

**2012 Record:** 27-22

**Conference:** 16-16, 2nd

**Returning Letter Winners:** 15

**Returning Starters (6 position):** Charlie Gorzo (C-OF, 6-1, 205, Sr., .351, 5 hr, 26 rbi, 2<sup>nd</sup> team GNAC DH & HM OF; 2<sup>nd</sup> team NCBWA); Kaleb DeHaas (3B, 5-11, 200, .312, 1 hr, 13 rbi, HM GNAC); Logan Parker (OF, 5-11, 190, Jr., .301, 1 hr, 20 rbi, HM GNAC); Jamie Mitchell (C, 6-0, 205, Sr., .260, 3 hr, 22 rbi, HM GNAC); Fernando Robles (2B-SS, 6-1, 180, Sr., .296, 5 hr, 25 rbi); Jon Matos (2B-SS, 6-0, 175, Sr., .227, 3 hr, 21 rbi)

**Key Returnees (25 or more at bats, 15 or more IP):** Aaron Vaughn (P, 5-11, 185, Jr., 4-3, 3.64 ERA, 1<sup>st</sup> team GNAC); Greg Hata (UT, 6-1, 175, Sr., .279, 0 hr, 4 rbi); Nate Forseth (P, 6-7,

200, So., 0-0, 1.65 ERA); Barrett Nielsen (P, 6-3, 190, Jr., 2-2, 4.67 ERA); Jeremy Burk (P, 5-11, 175, Sr., 0-1, 5.06)

**Top Transfers:** Andrew Groves (P, 5-11, 185, So., Mukilteo, WA – Bellevue CC, 4-1, 2.23 in 2011); Barak Frank (UT, 5-10, 175, Jr., Minico, ID – Grays Harbor, .313 in 2011)

### **MONTANA STATE BILLINGS Yellowjackets**

**Head Coach:** Rob Bishop, Jamestown '94 (40-53, 2 years)

**Assistants:** Chris Martin, Matt Comer

**2012 Record:** 22-24

**Conference:** 13-19, 3rd

**Returning Letter Winners:** 16

**Returning Starters (6 position, 3 pitchers):** Colby Robison (SS, 6-1, 190, Sr., .302, 3 hr, 25 rbi, 2<sup>nd</sup> team GNAC); Samuel Paterson (P, 5-9, 165, Sr., 2-7, 4.21 ERA, 2<sup>nd</sup> team GNAC); Brady Muller (P, 6-1, 165, So., 5-3, 4.84 ERA, HM GNAC); Matt Eames (P, 6-4, 200, Sr., 3-3, 5.27 ERA, HM GNAC); Blake Loran (1B-C, 6-0, 200, Jr., .333, 1 hr, 21 rbi, HM GNAC 1B); Brody Miller (2B, 5-8, 165, So., .288, 1 hr, 24 rbi); Austin Rue (OF, 5-9, 160, Sr., .227, 1 hr, 9 rbi); Mack Unruh (DH-P, 6-0, 180, Sr., .273, 0 hr, 12 rbi); Justin Harcharik (OF, 5-11, 175, Sr., .244, 0 hr, 5 rbi)

**Key Returnees (25 or more at bats, 15 or more IP):** Bobby Ragasa (P, 5-9, 190, Sr., 4-1, 4 saves, 2.91 ERA, HM GNAC); Jordan Carlson (OF, 6-0, 190, So., .206, 0 hr, 7 rbi); Orrin Pyrah (C, 5-10, 195, Sr., .119, 0 hr, 2 rbi); Travis Vincent (P, 6-1, 235, Sr., 0-1, 2.75 ERA)

**Top Transfers:** Drew Fosnes (C-OF, 6-0, 195, Jr., Woodinville, WA – Green River CC, 2<sup>nd</sup> team NWAACC, .286, 1 hr, 12 rbi); Dana Hill (C, 6-0, 185, So., Rapid City, SD – North Dakota State, played in 2 games); Kole Mickolio (P, 6-5, 220, Sr., Bozeman, MT – Utah Valley, 1-0 in 9 innings)

### **SAINT MARTIN'S Saints**

**Head Coach:** Ken Garland, Willamette '82 (82-116, 4 years; Overall, 10 years, 154-278-1)

**Assistants:** TBA

**2012 Record:** 15-35

**Conference:** 11-21, 4th-T

**Returning Letter Winners:** 18

**Returning Starters (5 position):** Chandler Tracy (C, 6-2, 215, So., .329, 8 hr, 39 rbi, 1<sup>st</sup> team GNAC & GNAC Freshman of the Year, 1<sup>st</sup> team NCBWA West Region & Freshman of the Year); Mario Sanelli (2B-SS, 6-0, 185, Sr., .316, 2 hr, 28 rbi, 1<sup>st</sup> team GNAC); Bobby Twedt (3B-2B, 5-10, 180, Sr., .279, 0 hr, 20 rbi); Travis Shaw (1B-OF, 5-11, 180, So., .238, 1 hr, 16 rbi); Spencer Dodd (1B, 6-1, 195, Jr., .208, 0 hr, 10 rbi)

**Key Returnees (25 or more at bats, 15 or more IP):** Alex Bielaski (OF, 6-0, 225, Jr., .289, 0 hr, 6 rbi); Stephen Mahnken (OF, 6-0, 180, So., .266, 0 hr, 2 rbi); Casey Thorpe (C, 6-0, 195, So., .216, 1 hr, 7 rbi); Zach Carter (P, 5-2, 4.50); Chase Decoito (P, 6-0, 200, So., 0-1, 8.58); Brad Banker (P, 6-0, 180, So., 1-0, 10.07); Josh Moss (2-4, 13.86 ERA).

**Top Transfers:** Chris Womac (OF, 5-11, 180, Jr., Green River CC, .240, 0 hr, 1 rbi).