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Western Washington Earns Top Spot in GNAC, 12th in AVCA Polls

Great Northwest Coaches Poll	2013 Records	Pts
1. Western Washington (8)	23-4 (16-2, 1 st)	80
2. Alaska Anchorage (1)	21-10 (15-3, 2 nd)	70
3. Northwest Nazarene (1)	18-6 (14-4, 3 rd)	69
4. Central Washington	15-12 (11-7, 4 th -T)	53
5. Seattle Pacific	15-11 (11-7, 4 th -T)	52
6. Western Oregon	10-18 (7-11, 6 th)	38
7. Simon Fraser	11-13 (6-12, 7 th)	30
8. Montana State Billings	7-20 (4-14, 8 th)	25
9. Saint Martin's	7-23 (3-15, 9 th -T)	17
10. Alaska	4-25 (3-15, 9 th -T)	16

(Note: First-place votes in parentheses. Points awarded on a 9-8-7-6-5-4-3-2-1 basis. Each coach ranked other nine teams).

PORTLAND, Ore. - Don't be surprised if you see a lot of familiar faces on GNAC volleyball courts this fall.

Virtually every team in the conference returns most of their key players led by two-time defending champion Western Washington.

The Vikings, who will be seeking their eighth GNAC title (in 14 seasons), are one of six teams with at least five returning starters.

WWU returns five plus AVCA first-team All-American libero Samantha Hutchinson.

Hutchinson ranked second in NCAA Division II in digs last season averaging 6.71.

Her 1,671 career digs ranks third in school history and seventh on the GNAC All-Time Top 10 list.

Hutchinson is one of two returning All-Americans for 15th year head coach Diane Flick, who is four wins shy of reaching the 300-victory plateau.

The other All-American is GNAC Player of the Year Kayla Erickson who led the GNAC in hitting

percentage (.380). The outside hitter was one of just four players who hit above .300 last year.

Flick is cautiously optimistic about her team's chances going into the 2014 season. WWU was 23-4 a year ago and returns 10 letter winners.

"Every team is different whether you've lost one senior (as WWU did) or five," Flick, the school's career-record holder in victories (296) and winning percentage (.791), said. "It is still a new team where chemistry has to form and roles have to be figured out."

The Vikings were one of three GNAC teams to receive NCAA playoff berths a year ago, though none of the three were able to win a set at the regional tournament.

The other two – Alaska Anchorage and Central Washington – also return double-digit letter winners.

The Seawolves have 10 including four returning starters and their libero, while Central Washington has 13, including three starters and their libero.

Another dangerous team this fall figures to be Northwest Nazarene, which has 13 returning letter winners, including all six of its starters. and just missed a playoff berth a year ago.

Western Washington is the favorite in the GNAC Coaches pre-season poll receiving eight of 10 first-place votes and 80 ballot points.

The Vikings also earned a No. 12 ranking in the AVCA national poll.

Alaska Anchorage and Northwest Nazarene each received one first-place vote. UAA nipped NNU by one point (70-69) to finish second in the balloting.

Central Washington, which tied Seattle Pacific for fourth place in the conference standings last year, edged the Falcons by one point for fourth place (53-52) in the pre-season balloting.

CWU and UAA were among "others receiving votes" in the national poll, ranking 35th and 36th overall.

The remaining five teams – Western Oregon (6th), Simon Fraser (7th), Montana State Billings (8th), Saint Martin's (9th) and Alaska (10th) - finished in virtually the same order in the poll as they did in the 2013 regular-season .

The only difference was that SMU and the Nanooks tied for ninth in the standings. The Saints edged Alaska by one point in the poll.

The 10 teams have a total of 100 returning players, an average of 10 per team. Nearly three quarters of last year's starters (44 of 60) and eight of last year's 10 liberos are back.

Among the returnees are 17 of last year's Top 20 kill producers, including Alaska's Sam Harthun who led the league producing 4.39 per set.

The top four setters also return including Western Washington's Taylor Dillard.

Eleven returnees were among the 14 players named to last year's GNAC first team all-conference team, led by WWU's Erickson, Hutchinson and opposite hitter Jennica McPherson.

Three teams return two first team selections.

Among them is Alaska Anchorage AVCA second team All-American outside hitter Katelynn Zanders and rightside hitter Julia Mackey, middle blocker Andrea Terpstra and setter Michelle Terpstra of Northwest Nazarene and setter Catie Fry and libero Kaely Kight of Central Washington.

Also earning first team honors last fall were middle blocker Madi Cavell of Seattle Pacific, outside hitter

Monica Grimsrud of Montana State Billings and Alaska's Harthun.

TEAM CAPSULES

WESTERN WASHINGTON VIKINGS

Head Coach: Diane Flick, UW '93 (296-78, 14 years)

Assistants: James Suh, Nate Langstraat, Megan Amundson

2014 Record: 23-4

Conference: 16-2, 1st

Returning Letter Winners: 10

Returning Starters (5+L): Kayla Erickson (MB, 6-0, Sr., 3.65 kps, 0.41 dps, 104 blocks, Daktronics All-American 2nd team; HM AVCA All-American; Two-time Daktronics All-Region 1st team; AVCA All-Region 1st team; GNAC Player of the Year); Samantha Hutchinson (L, 5-7, Sr., 6.91 dps, 10 aces, AVCA All-American 1st team; Daktronics All-American 2nd team; Daktronics All-Region 1st team; Two-time AVCA All-Region 1st team; GNAC Defensive Player of the Year); Jennica McPherson (OPP, 5-11, Jr., 2.57 kps, 2.76 dps, 30 aces, 36 blocks, 1st team GNAC); Taylor Dillard (S, 5-8, Sr., 11.7 aps, 1.61 dps, 16 aces, 54 blocks, 2nd team Daktronics All-Region, HM GNAC); Rachel Roeder (OH, 6-1, Jr., 2.17 kps, 0.72 dps, 39 blocks); Bryce Larson (DS, 5-10, So., 2.62 dps, 10 aces)

Other Key Returnees (30 or more sets): Kelsey Moore (OH, 6-1, Sr., 2.96 kps, 0.87 dps, 50 blocks, HM GNAC); Emily Cotter (OH, 5-9, Sr., 2.99 dps)

OUTLOOK

All-Americans Kayla Erickson (MB, 6-0, Sr., Gig Harbor, WA – Peninsula) and Samantha Hutchinson (L, 5-7, Sr., University Place, WA – Curtis) are among four returning all-conference players for the Vikings.

Erickson was a second team Daktronics and honorable mention AVCA pick after averaging 3.65 kills and producing 104 blocks.

She led the GNAC in hitting percentage (.380), ranked fourth in kills (3.65) and third in blocks (1.18 per set).

"Kayla is a complete package," Flick said, "both for what you get with her as a player, and as captain."

Hutchinson, who earned second team Daktronics All-American honors in addition to her first team AVCA

award, keys the WWU defense, which held its opponents to a .127 percentage a year ago, the third lowest in GNAC history.

“Sam not only plays great defense, she’s the eyes on the court for us,” Flick said. “She works with the block as much as she plays the ball, and it’s nice to have a leader on the court who is also such a productive player.”

Jennica McPherson (5-11, Jr., Seattle, WA – Kennedy) was a first team all-conference selection on the opposite side where she averaged 2.57 kills and 2.76 digs and had 36 blocks while also leading WWU in aces with 30.

“Her position has slowly grown over time,” Flick said. “She does the front row work, she’s a good defensive player in the back row and her jump serve is a weapon.”

Also recognized by the GNAC coaches last fall with honorable mention honors were setter Taylor Dillard (5-8, Sr., Milton, WA – Fife) and outside hitter Kelsey Moore (6-1, Sr., Bellevue, WA – Newport).

Dillard led the GNAC in assists (11.7) and also contributed 54 blocks. She was also a second Daktronics West Region selection. She, however, could be pushed by redshirt freshman Kristina Tribbley (Wenatchee, WA – Wenatchee) for the starting role.

Moore averaged 2.96 kills and 0.59 blocks.

Also back this season are outside hitters Rachel Roeder (6-1, Jr., Sammamish, WA – Issaquah), who averaged 2.17 kills, and Emily Cotter (5-9, Sr., University Place, WA – Curtis), who chipped in with 2.99 digs per set and defensive specialist Bryce Larson (5-10, So., Mukilteo, WA – Kamiak), who averaged 2.62 dig and had 10 aces.

ALASKA ANCHORAGE SEAWOLVES

Head Coach: Chris Green, Nebraska ‘91 (111-60, 6 years)

Assistants: Nicky Rose

Grad Assistant: TBA

2013 Record: 21-10

Conference: 15-3, 2nd

Returning Letter Winners: 10 (9 from 2013)

Returning Starters (4+L): Katelynn Zanders (OH, 5-9, Jr., 3.69 kps, 2.75 dps, 33 aces, 58 blocks, AVCA All-American 2nd team; 1st team AVCA All-Region; 1st team GNAC); Julia Mackey (RS, 5-11, Jr., 3.20 kps, 0.55 dps, 47 blocks, 1st team GNAC); Quinn Barker (L, 5-4, Sr., 4.64 dps, 25 aces, HM GNAC, GNAC Newcomer of the Year); Erin Braun (MB, 6-0, So., 1.41 kps, 0.20 dps, 100 blocks, GNAC Freshman of the Year); Brooke Pottle (OH, 5-8, Sr., 2.31 kps, 2.66 dps, 22 aces, 16 blocks)

Other Key Returnees (30 or more sets): Maureen Sabado (RS, 5-10, Sr., 1.54 kps, 0.47 dps, 65 blocks); Caitlin McInerney (MB/RS, 5-11, Jr., 1.03 kps, 0.30 dps, 30 blocks); Sarah Johnson (OH, 6-1, Jr., 0.38 kps, 0.52 dps; 18 aces); Morgan Hooe (S, 5-7, So., 4.50 aps, 1.95 dps, 25 aces); Breanne Sytnyk (MB, 6-0, So., 1.28 kps, 0.25 dps, 57 blocks in 68 sets in 2012)

Transfers: Rachel Rutherford (S/L, 5-5 Jr., Pomona, CA – Arizona Western)

OUTLOOK

The Seawolves have qualified for the NCAA regionals in four of five seasons under Chris Green who has posted a 111-60 record.

With two of last year’s Top 10 kill producers in the GNAC, UAA could once again challenge for an NCAA berth.

Back to lead the Seawolves is second team AVCA All-American Katelynn Zanders (5-9, Jr., Anchorage, AK – South) and right side hitter Julia Mackey (5-11, Jr., Fairbanks, AK – West Valley).

Zanders ranked third in the GNAC in kills averaging 3.69 per set and also contributed defensively (2.75 digs, 58 blocks) and from the service area (33 aces).

Mackey ranked ninth in kills (3.20) and had 47 blocks to earn first team GNAC honors. She ranked just ninth in the conference in hitting percentage for all matches (.269), but was the leader in that category in conference matches (.348).

Libero Quinn Barker (5-4, Sr., Mission Viejo, CA – Trabuco Hills/Central Arizona) was selected the *GNAC Newcomer of the Year* in addition to earning honorable mention GNAC recognition. Her 4.64 digs per set average ranked fourth.

Meanwhile, middle blocker Erin Braun (6-0, So., San Bernardino, CA – Cajon) was voted the *GNAC Freshman of the Year*. She averaged 1.41 kills and nearly a block per set (100 in 101 sets).

Also back from last year's starting lineup is outside Brooke Pottle (5-8, Sr., Peoria, AZ – Centennial/Glendale CC), who averaged 2.31 kills and 2.66 digs in her junior season.

Four other players who participated in 30 or more sets a year ago – right side hitter Maureen Sabado (5-10, Sr., Kodiak, AK – San Diego City College), middle blocker Caitlin McInerney (5-11, Jr., Laramie, WY – Western Wyoming CC), outside hitter Sarah Johnson (6-1, Jr., Anchorage, AK – South) and setter Morgan Hooe (5-7, So., Anchorage, AK – South) also return.

Sabado averaged 1.54 kills and had 65 blocks in 2013, while McInerney averaged 1.03 kills and blocked 30 attacks. Johnson had 41 kills, 56 digs and 18 aces in playing in all 108 of UAA's sets.

Hooe averaged 4.50 assists in 100 sets and also had 195 digs and 24 aces.

Another experienced player is middle blocker Breanne Sytnyk (6-0, So., Shoal Lake, MB), who averaged 1.28 kills and had 57 blocks in 68 sets in 2012 before sitting out the 2013 set.

UAA's lone transfer is setter/libero Rachel Rutherford (5-5, Jr., Pomona, CA) who averaged 2.32 digs last season leading Arizona Western to a 20-6 record and a Arizona Community College Athletic Conference league title.

NORTHWEST NAZARENE CRUSADERS

Head Coach: Doug English, Cal State Northridge '04 (18-6, 1 year)

Assistants: Ryan Adams, Jeanette Jenkins

2013 Record: 18-6

Conference: 14-4, 3rd

Returning Letter Winners: 13

Returning Starters (6+L): Andrea Terpstra (MB, 6-4, Jr., 3.58 kps, 0.60 dps, 106 blocks, HM AVCA All-American; 1st team AVCA All-Region; 2nd Team Daktronics All-Region, 1st team GNAC); Michelle Terpstra (S, 5-9, Sr., 1.14 kps, 2.74 dps, 10.3 aces, 21 aces, 52 blocks, 1st team GNAC); Elayna Rice (OH, 6-3,

Jr., 3.61 kps, 3.19 dps, 13 aces, 40 blocks, HM GNAC); Taylor VanValey (RS, 6-2, Jr., 1.71 kps, 0.35 dps, 46 blocks); Kaitlyn Tuholski (OH, 5-10, Sr., 1.54 kps, 3.33 dps, 21 aces, 41 blocks); Jenna Caywood (MB, 6-2, Jr., 1.26 kps, 0.26 dps, 62 blocks); Taylor Roberts (L, 5-5, Sr., 4.40 dps)

Other Key Returnees: Taylor Gould (L, 5-8, So., 0.73 dps, 22 aces); Linnea Phillips (L, 5-5, Jr., 2.33 dps, 22 aces)

Transfers: None

OUTLOOK

Northwest Nazarene finished three matches ahead of Central Washington in the final conference standings last season and had half as many total losses as the Wildcats.

So its understandable there was great disappointment in the Crusader camp when CWU was chosen for the NCAA regional field and NNU was left out.

Everyone from that team, however, will be back this fall as Doug English begins his second season as head coach after leading NNU to an 18-6 record.

That was the Crusaders' best record in GNAC history including an 18-9 record in 2007 when they received their lone NCAA post-season invitation.

NNU, which won its final five matches and eight of its last nine, has as many returning letter winners (13), starters (6 plus its libero) and second most all-stars (3 including two first-team selections) as any team in the GNAC.

That includes middle blocker Andrea Terpstra (6-4, Jr., Ripon, CA – Ripon Christian/San Diego State), who finished the season ranked second in the GNAC in blocks (106) and seventh in kills (3.57) in earning AVCA All-American honorable mention honors.

Michelle Terpstra (5-9, Sr., Ripon, CA – Ripon Christian) also had an outstanding season joining her sister on the GNAC first-team all-conference team after finishing third in the conference in assists (10.3) and averaging 1.14 kills and 2.74 digs. She also had 52 blocks, the third most on the team.

Outside hitter Elayna Rice (6-3, Jr., Billings, MT – Senior) joined the Terpstras on the All-GNAC team earning honorable mention honors. She led the Crusaders and ranked sixth in the GNAC in kills averaging 3.61 per set, and also ranked third on the team in blocks (3.19).

The rest of last year's starting lineup also returns intact including rightside hitter Taylor VanValey (6-2, Jr., Brush Prairie, WA – Hockinson), who averaged 1.71 kills and had 46 blocks; outside hitter Kaitlyn Tuholski (5-10, Sr., Vancouver, WA - Heritage), who netted 1.54 kills and 3.33 digs per set, and middle blocker Jenna Caywood (6-2, Jr., Meridian, ID – Cole Valley Christian), who had 1.26 kills per set and 62 blocks.

Libero Taylor Roberts (5-5, Sr., Nampa, ID - Vallivue), who ranked fifth in the GNAC in digs (4.40), also returns to anchor NNU's defense which returns two other players – Taylor Gould (5-8, So., Coeur d'Alene, ID) and Linnea Phillips (5-5, Jr., Yakima, WA – West Valley) – who combed for 239 digs in reserve roles.

Phillips had 177 digs and tied Gould for the team lead in service aces with 22, one more each than Tuholski and Michelle Terpstra, who had 21.

CENTRAL WASHINGTON WILDCATS

Head Coach: Mario Andaya, CWU '93 (281-212, 18 years)

Assistants: Chloe Solum, Marcy Hjellum

2013 Record: 15-12

Conference: 11-7, 4th-T

Returning Letter Winners: 13

Returning Starters (3+L): Catie Fry (S, 5-11, Jr., 0.59 kps, 10.5 aps, 1.86 dps, 26 aces, 59 blocks, HM AVCA All-American; HM AVCA All-Region; 1st team GNAC); Kaely Kight (L, 5-9, Sr., 5.48 dps, 21 aces, 1st team GNAC); Rachel Hanses (OH, 5-10, Jr., 2.55 kps, 1.16 dps, 25 blocks); Kaitlin Quirk (MB, 6-1, Jr., 1.93 kps, 0.50 dps, 20 aces, 103 blocks)

Other Key Returnees (30 or more sets): Linden Firethorne (OH/MB, 5-11, Jr., 3.09 kps, 0.68 dps, 37 blocks, HM GNAC); Jordan Deming (PH, 5-9, So., 1.73 kps, 2.63 dps, 15 aces, 13 blocks); Lindsey Milner (OH, 5-10, So., 0.32 kps, 1.81 dps, 14 aces); Lauren Herseth (DS/L, 5-6, Sr., 2.52 dps, 13 aces)

Transfers: None

OUTLOOK

Central Washington will be seeking its third straight NCAA post-season appearance and its fifth overall under 19th year head coach Mario Andaya.

Andaya, who needs just 19 more wins to reach the coveted 300-win plateau, originally came to CWU to compete in track-and-field in the long jump and triple jump, and has spent his entire professional career in Ellensburg.

Andaya, who won back-to-back GNAC titles in 2004 and 2005 sharing the latter one with Seattle Pacific, returns 13 players from last year's team, matching NNU and Simon Fraser for the most in that category.

Eight of the 13 played in 30 or more sets including All-American setter Catie Fry (5-11, Jr., Tacoma, WA – Mt. Si), who averaged 10.5 assists and 1.86 digs and had 59 blocks to earn AVCA honorable mention honors. Her assist total ranked second in the GNAC in back of WWU's Taylor Dillard.

Libero Kaely Kight (5-9, Sr., Spokane, WA – Mead) was a first team GNAC selection, finishing second to WWU's Samantha Hutchinson in the GNAC in digs (5.48). She also had 21 aces, the second most on the team.

Outside Rachel Hanses (5-10, Jr., Yakima, WA – West Valley) and middle blocker Kaitlin Quirk (6-1, Jr., Ellensburg, WA) were starters last season. Hanses averaged 2.55 kills to rank third on the team, while Quirk led the team in blocks with 103 in 100 sets and had 193 kills.

Linden Firethorne (5-11, Jr., Clinton, WA – South Whidbey) led CWU in kills, averaging 3.09, despite starting just five matches. She still earned GNAC honorable mention honors despite playing in just 79 of 101 sets.

Outside hitters Jordan Deming (5-9, So., Hillsboro, OR – Century) and Lindsey Milner (5-10, So., Edmonds, WA – Meadowdale) and defensive specialist Lauren Herseth (5-6, Sr., Olympia, WA) also played key reserve roles.

Deming averaged 1.73 kills and 2.63 digs, while Milner had 107 digs in 58 sets. Herseth averaged 2.42 digs. She was just one of two players on the squad to play in all 101 sets.

SEATTLE PACIFIC FALCONS

Head Coach: Chris Johnson, Westmont '02 (162-84, 9 years)

Assistants: Whitney Dibble, Kin Yun

2013 Record: 15-11

Conference: 11-7, 4th-T

Returning Letter Winners: 8

Returning Starters (4+L): Madi Cavell (MB, 6-0, Sr., 3.45 kps, 2.51 dps, 28 aces, 67 blocks, 1st team GNAC); Ellie Britt (OH, 6-0, Jr., 2.36 kps, 1.80 dps, 13 aces, 44 blocks); Kendall (Langdon) Carver (S, 5-9, Sr., 5.61 aps, 2.01 dps); Brianna Leenders (L, 5-7, Sr., 4.37 dps, 18 aces); Jessica Miller (OH, 6-3, Sr., 1.37 kps, 0.39 dps, 24 blocks)

Other Key Returnees (30 or more sets): Lexi Biondi (OH, 5-10, So., 1.65 kps, 1.51 dps, 16 blocks); Sara Biondi (S, 5-10, Sr., 0.52 kps, 0.65 dps, 4.97 aps, 69 blocks) Breanne Wiekamp (L, 5-4, Jr., 2.00 dps, 18 aces)

Transfers: Jessica Boyle (MB, 6-0, Jr., Lake Stevens, WA – Marysville-Pilchuck – Edmonds CC); Luisa McInnis (MB, 5-10, Jr., Santa Rosa, CA – Montgomery/Santa Rosa JC)

OUTLOOK

Middle blocker Madi Cavell, who led the Falcons in kills last season, is back to lead Seattle Pacific this fall.

Cavell (6-0, Sr., Keizer, OR – McNary) ranked eighth in the GNAC last season averaging 3.45 kills per contest in earning first team all-conference honors. She was also the team leader in aces with 28 and ranked second in digs (2.51) and fourth in blocks with 66.

Three other starters and SPU's libero also return from last year's team.

Outside hitter Ellie Britt (6-0, Jr., Orange, CA – Orange Lutheran) averaged 2.36 kills and 1.80 digs. Setter Kendall (Langdon) Carver (5-9, Sr., Irvine, CA – Northwood) produced 5.61 assists per set and 2.01 digs.

Outside hitter Jessica Miller (6-3, Sr., Fife, WA) who was a starter before missing almost two months of the season, averaged 1.37 kills in 38 sets.

Libero Brianna Leenders (5-7, Sr., Portland, OR – Sam Barlow) led SPU in digs, averaging 4.37 per set and also had 18 service aces.

Three other players participated in 30 or more sets including outside hitter Lexi Biondi (5-10, So., Albuquerque, NM – St. Pius X), who had 84 kills and 77 digs in 51 sets.

Sara Biondi (5-10, Sr., Sacramento, CA – Christian Brothers/WSU) who split setting duties with Langdon, had 457 assists (4.97 per set) and 69 blocks. Brianna Leenders (5-7, Sr., Portland, OR – Sam Barlow) averaged 2.00 digs per set and also had 18 aces.

Additions to the squad this fall include middle blockers Jessica Boyle from Edmonds CC and Luisa McInnis from Santa Rose JC. McInnis was a 5-6 high jumper in junior college.

WESTERN OREGON WOLVES

Head Coach: Brad Saindon, Arizona State '76 (89-74, 6 years; Overall, 391-289, 23 years)

Assistants: Malia Shoji

2013 Record: 10-18

Conference: 7-11, 6th

Returning Letter Winners: 8

Returning Starters (5): Hannah Deede (OPP, 6-2, Sr., 2.15 kps, 1.50 dps, 16 aces, 99 blocks); Cherene O'Hara (MB, 6-1, Sr., 1.95 kps, 0.37 dps, 71 blocks); Christie Colasurdo (OH, 5-11, So., 1.85 kps, 2.76 dps, 14 aces, 24 blocks); Samantha Moore (OH, 6-0, Sr., 1.38 kps, 0.35 dps, 34 blocks); Jordin Ramos (S, 5-5, Sr., 5.21 aps, 2.16 dps, 12 aces)

Other Key Returnees (30 or more sets): Lani Kalalau (OH, 5-8, So., 1.46 kps, 1.07 dps, 10 blocks); Hannah Crites (MB, 5-8, So., 0.84 kps, 26 blocks)

Transfers: Sydney Blankenship (MB, 6-0, Fr., Portland, OR – Westview/Alaska Anchorage)

OUTLOOK

Five starters are among eight returning letter winners for Brad Saindon who has posted 391 victories in 23 seasons at Regis, Colorado, Arizona State and Western Oregon.

Saindon has spent the last six years at WOU compiling a 89-74 won-loss record including a 22-3 record in 2008 when he won the conference title.

Three of last year's top four kill producers are back led by opposite hitter Hannah Deede (6-2, Sr., Silverton, OR – Gonzaga), who had 228 kills, 159 digs and 99 blocks in 106 sets.

Also back is middle blocker Cherene O'Hara (6-1, Sr., Portland, OR – Edinboro), who had 217 kills and 71 blocks in 111 sets and outside hitter Christie Colasurdo (5-11, So., Olympia, WA), who had 203 kills and ranked second on the team in digs with 304 in 110 sets.

Also returning from last year's starting unit is outside hitter Samantha Moore (6-0, Sr., Newport, OR – Portland) and setter Jordan Ramos (5-5, Sr., Makakilo, HI – Hawaii Baptist).

Moore averaged 1.38 kills and had 34 blocks in 84 sets. Ramos averaged 5.21 assists and contributed 2.16 digs per set.

Sydney Blankinship (6-0, Fr., Portland, OR – Westview), who redshirted at Alaska Anchorage before transferring to Western Oregon, is among 10 freshmen on this year's roster.

SIMON FRASER CLAN

Head Coach: Gina Schmidt, Oregon State '03 (11-13, 1 year)

Assistants: Rob Gowe

2013 Record: 11-13

Conference: 6-12, 7th

Returning Letter Winners: 13 (2 from 2012)

Returning Starters (6+L): Kelsey Robinson (LS, 5-11, Sr., 3.63 kps, 3.17 dps, 10 aces, 40 blocks, HM GNAC); Madeline Hait (M, 5-11, Sr., 2.37 kps, 0.18 dps, 80 block, HM GNAC); Amanda Renkema (M, 6-1, Sr., 2.26 kps, 0.69 dps, 13 aces, 62 blocks); Brooklyn Gould-Bradbury (S, 5-7, Sr., 0.40 kps, 1.82 dps, 6.45 aps, 12 aces); Alison McKay (L, 5-6, So., 2.90 dps, 20 aces); Helen Yan (LS, 5-7, Jr., 1.80 dps, 18 aces); Tamara Nipp (S, 5-9, Jr., 4.88 aps, 0.44 dps, 23 blocks)

Other Key Returnees (30 or more sets): Devon May (OH, 5-9, So., 1.78 kps, 0.53 dps, 16 blocks); Mackenzie Dunham (RS, 6-0, So., 1.30 kps, 0.32 dps, 21 blocks); Rachel Vanstone (M, 6-0, Jr., 0.96 kps, 0.27

dps, 22 blocks); Jessica Young (OH, 5-8, Jr., 2.86 kps, 2.27 dps, 11 aces, 23 blocks as 2012); Danielle Curtis (S, 5-8, Jr., 1.29 kps, 2.98 dps, 18 aces, 17 blocks as 2012 starter)

Transfers: None

OUTLOOK

The Clan nearly tripled its win total last year in Gina Schmidt's first season improving from 4-22 to 11-13. With virtually everyone back this season, there is optimism in Burnaby.

Among 13 returning letter winners, which matches Northwest Nazarene and Central Washington for the most in the GNAC, are two honorable mention all-league performers – outside hitter Kelsey Robinson (5-11, Sr., Surrey, BC – Clayton Heights) and middle blocker Madeline Hait (5-11, Sr., Burnaby, BC – Burnaby Central).

Robinson led the team a year ago in kills with 316 ranking fifth in the GNAC averaging 3.63 per set. She also ranked second on the team in digs (3.17).

Hait contributed 2.37 kills per set and led the Clan in hitting percentage (.262) and blocks with 80.

Also back from last year's starting unit are middle blocker Amanda Renkema (6-1, Sr., Delta, BC – Richmond Christian), setter Brooklyn Gould-Bradbury (5-7, Sr., Seattle, WA – North Idaho), left side hitter Helen Yan (5-7, Jr., Port Moody, BC) and libero Alison McKay (5-6, So., Port Moody, BC – Heritage Woods).

Renkema averaged 2.26 kills per set and ranked second on the team in blocks with 62. Gould-Bradbury averaged 6.45 assists and 1.82 digs per set.

Yan, who started 14 matches, averaged 1.80 digs and McKay had 252 digs in 87 sets.

Tamara Nipp (5-9, Jr., Vancouver, BC – Crofton House) had 312 assists (4.88 per set) in 64 sets as she made 13 starts.

Five other veteran players return including outside Jessica Young (5-8, Jr., Vancouver, BC – Gladstone) and setter Danielle Curtis (5-8, Jr., North Vancouver,

BC – Handsworth) who sat out last season after starting in 2012.

Young led the team two years ago in kills averaging 2.86 kills per set and also averaged 2.27 digs per set. Curtis averaged 1.29 kills and 2.98 digs during the 2012 season.

Back from last year's team are outside hitter Devon May (5-9, So., Robert's Creek, BC – Elphinstone), rightside hitter Mackenzie Dunham (6-0, So., Lloydminster, AB) and middle blocker Rachel Vanstone (6-0, Jr., Nanaimo, BC – Dover Bay).

May averaged 1.78 kills in 78 sets and Dunham averaged 1.30 kills in 37 sets. Vanstone contributed 49 kills in 51 sets last season.

MONTANA STATE BILLINGS YELLOWJACKETS

Head Coach: Lisa Axel, Minnesota '02 (18-35, 2 years)

Assistants: Jodi Alexander

2013 Record: 7-20

Conference: 4-14, 8th

Returning Letter Winners: 9

Returning Starters (5): Monica Grimsrud (OH, 6-1, Sr., 3.74 kps, 1.70 dps, 11 aces, 55 blocks, 1st team GNAC); Chelsey Walter (MH/OH, 6-2, Sr., 2.76 kps, 0.47 dps, 14 aces, 80 blocks); Stormy Siemion (OH, 5-8, So., 2.11 kps, 2.86 dps); Krista Norris (OH, 5-9, Sr., 1.00 kps, 2.01 dps); Kyndal Williams (S, 5-9, Jr., 0.46 kps, 1.78 dps, 10.2 aps, 19 aces, 35 blocks)

Other Key Returnees (30 or more sets): Ashlynn Ward (OH, 6-1, So., 2.33 kps, 0.52 dps, 43 blocks); Julia Anderson (MB, 6-2, So., 0.83 kps, 34 blocks); Kierney Findon (DS/L, 5-9, So., 2.00 dps); Kimmy Kirk (DS/L, 5-5, So., 1.99 dps, 10 aces)

Transfers: None

OUTLOOK

Outside hitter Monica Grimsrud ranked second in the GNAC last season in kills averaging 3.74 in earning first team all-league honors. She along with four other starters return this fall to lead the Yellowjackets

She accounted for nearly 30 percent of MSUB's kills (359 of 1203) and also had 163 digs and 55 blocks. The latter number ranked second on the team.

Middle hitter Chelsey Walter averaged 2.76 kills to rank 13th in the GNAC. Her .275 hitting percentage ranked seventh in the GNAC and her 80 blocks paced MSUB.

Other returnees for MSUB include outside hitter Stormy Siemion and Krista Norris and setter Kyndal Williams.

Siemion averaged 2.11 kills and 2.86 digs, ranking her second on the team in the defensive category.

Norris average one kill per set and twice as many digs (2.01) in 68 sets. Williams finished the season ranked fourth in the GNAC in assists averaging 10.2 per set. She also had 173 digs in 97 sets.

Four other players participated in 30 or more sets – outside hitter Ashlynn Ward, middle blocker Julia Anderson and defensive specialists Kirney Findon and Kimmy Kirk.

Ward averaged 2.33 kills and had 43 blocks. Anderson had 34 kills and 34 blocks in 42 sets, while Findon and Kirk had almost identical dig averages (2.00 and 1.99).

SAINT MARTIN'S SAINTS

Head Coach: Kara Peterson, Washington '86 (7-23, 1 year)

Assistants: Leejay Lee, Jessica Levine

2013 Record: 7-23

Conference: 3-15, 9th-T

Returning Letter Winners: 9

Returning Starter (5+L): Kristyn Ross (OH, 5-10, Sr., 3.10 kps, 2.93 dps, 20 aces, 24 blocks); Kyra Davidson (MB, 6-2, Jr., 2.38 kps, 0.29 dps, 73 blocks); Carrie Starbuck (OH, 5-10, Jr., 1.96 kps, 1.03 dps, 18 aces, 14 blocks); Brooke Good (OH, 6-0, So., 1.93 kps, 0.90 dps, 23 aces, 81 blocks); Larissa Hamilton (MB, 6-1, So., 1.51 kps, 0.32 dps, 10 aces, 70 blocks); Jessica Riddle (OH, 5-10, So., 3.65 dps, 14 aces)

Other Key Returnees (30 or more sets): Julia Wabinga (OH, 5-8, Jr., 1.82 kps, 0.69 dps, 14 blocks); Maddie Knecht (MB, 6-3, So., 1.33 kps, 0.29 dps, 60 blocks)

Transfers: None

OUTLOOK

The Saints posted a 7-23 record a year ago under first-year coach Kara Peterson and return all but one starter this fall including all five players that had 100 or more kills.

Among the returnees is Kristyn Ross (5-10, Sr., Olympia, WA – Capital), who led the team and ranked 10th in the GNAC in kills with 332 (3.10 per set). Ross also had 313 digs to rank second on the team.

Middle blocker Kyra Davidson (6-2, Jr., Hockinson, WA) had 174 kills and 73 blocks despite missing nine matches. She finished third on the team in kills and second in blocks.

Other returning players who reached the century mark in kills included outside hitter Brooke Good (6-0, So., Auburn, WA) who had 207 (1.93 per set), middle blocker Larissa Hamilton (6-1, So., Vancouver, WA – Skyview), who had 136 (1.51 per set) and outside hitter Carrie Starbuck (5-10, Jr., Lynden, WA), who had 135 (1.96 per set).

Good also led the team in blocks with 81, while Hamilton ranked third with 70.

Jessica Riddle (5-10, So., Anacortes, WA) also returns this fall after leading the team a year ago in digs with 369 (3.65).

Other returning players who participated in 30 or more sets include outside hitter Julia Wabinga (5-8, Jr., Olympia, WA – North Thurston) and middle blocker Maddie Knecht (6-3, So., Gig Harbor, WA).

Wabinga had 93 kills in 51 sets. Knecht had 96 kills and 60 blocks in 72 sets.

ALASKA NANOOKS

Head Coach: Mallory Larranaga, Alaska Fairbanks '05 (4-25, 1 year)

Assistant Coach: Jamie Foland

2013 Record: 4-25

Conference: 3-15, 9th-T

Returning Letter Winners: 7

Returning Starters (1+L): Sam Harthun (OH, 6-0, Jr., 4.39 kps, 2.06 dps, 32 aces, 32 blocks, HM AVCA All-Region, 1st team GNAC); Tessa Butterfield (L, 5-7, Sr.,

0.12 kps, 2.71 dps, 21 aces); Samantha Hesterman (L, 5-5, Jr., 2.31 dps)

Other Key Returnees (30 or more sets): Lilah Hudson (MB, 6-3, So., 0.43 kps, 12 blocks); Jordan Ferland (DS, 5-5, Jr., 0.20 dps, 12 aces); Meagan Olsen (DS, 5-6, So., 1.06 dps)

Transfers: Miranda Grieser (S, 5-7, Jr., Maple Valley, WA – Highline CC); Kelsey Mix (MB, 5-11, Jr., Kennewick, WA – Blue Mountain)

OUTLOOK

Sam Harthun had an impressive sophomore season last year leading the GNAC in kills (4.39) and points (4.91) and earning first team GNAC all-conference honors.

Harthun (6-0, Jr., Oregon City, OR) accounted for 39.2 percent of her team's totals.

The outside hitter, however, is the lone returning starter for the Nanooks, who hope to improve on last year's 4-25 record when they finished tied for ninth in the GNAC with Saint Martin's with 3-15 conference records.

Alaska does return two of its defensive specialists. Tessa Butterfield (5-7, Sr., Grass Valley, CA – San Diego City) led the team in digs with 266 and Samantha Hesterman (5-5, Jr., Ormiston, SK – Assiniboia Composite) had 192 to rank third in back of Harthun.

Only three other players competed in 30 or more sets last season – middle blocker Lilah Hudson and defensive specialists Jordan Gerland and Meagan Olsen.

Hudson (6-3, So., Seattle, WA – Kennedy) had 13 kills and 12 blocks in 30 sets. Ferland (5-5, Jr., Beaver Creek, OR – Oregon City) had 10 digs in 51 sets and Olsen (5-6, So., Fairbanks, AK – West Valley) had 37 digs in 35 sets.

Two transfers – setter Miranda Grieser (5-7, Jr., Maple Valley, WA – Highline CC) and middle blocker Kelsey Mix (5-11, Jr., Kennewick, WA – Blue Mountain) are among the newcomers for the Nanooks.

Grieser earned first team NWAACC West Region all-star honors last season for Highline CC. Mix was the second leading blocker in the NWAACC tournament leading Blue Mountain to the championship.