

# GREAT NORTHWEST ATHLETIC CONFERENCE

Contact: Bob Guptill (509-535-5291/Fax 535-5293/e-mail –bguptill@gnacsports.com)

Report 21A (Jan. 29, 2009)

## MSUB Favored To Win First GNAC Softball Title

Great Northwest Coaches Poll	2008 Records	Pts
1. Montana State Billings (3)	28-21, 16-8	33
2. Western Oregon (3)	33-18, 18-6	32
3. Western Washington	24-24, 11-13	23
4. Central Washington	17-17, 12-12	18
5. Saint Martin's	21-23, 7-17	13
6. Northwest Nazarene	9-43, 2-22	7

(Note: First-place votes in parenthesis. Points awarded on a 6-5-4-3-2-1 basis).

SPOKANE – Montana State Billings, which was in the title chase until the final weekend of the season a year ago before finishing third, is a narrow favorite to dethrone defending champion Western Oregon and win its first Great Northwest Athletic Conference softball title this spring.

Both teams received three first-place votes, but coach Anthony Stone's Yellowjackets narrowly edged the Wolves 33-32 in the GNAC Coaches pre-season poll. WOU was the GNAC co-champion last season along with Seattle University and was also the West Region runner-up.

MSUB returns three hitters who ranked in the Top 10 and a league-best five all-stars from last year's team that posted a 16-8 conference record and a 28-21 overall mark during its first season as a member of the GNAC.

Back among six returning starters for MSUB are outfielder Stephanie Gosselin (5-9, Sr., Victoria, BC – Stelly's), who finished second in the conference in hitting (.408), first baseman Terina Stacks (5-7, Sr., Washougal, WA) who ranked eighth with a .373 average and third baseman Leslie Davis (5-8, Sr., Federal Way, WA), who finished 10<sup>th</sup> in the conference batting chase with a .361 average.

Davis also led the league in doubles with 15, hit seven home runs and drove in 33 runs in earning first team all-conference honors, while pitcher-designated player Lisa Moore (5-6, Sr., Bakersfield, CA – Liberty) and Stacks were second team selections.

Moore was the GNAC's fifth ranked pitcher a year ago with a 12-5 record and a 2.40 ERA and also contributed offensively to a team that led the conference in hitting (.322) and home runs (43), batting .274.

Catcher Kelly Parsons (5-7, So., Seattle, WA – Mount Rainier), who was selected the *GNAC Freshman of the Year*, and Gosselin also earned all-star recognition a year ago. Parsons, who batted .341 and had nine home runs and

34 RBI, was a second team pick, while Gosselin was an honorable mention selection.

Western Oregon, which is ranked 28<sup>th</sup> in the NFCA pre-season national poll, has just four starters back from a team that was twice one win away from winning the region title against eventual national champion Humboldt State.

While that is the fewest number of returning starters of any team in the conference, the Wolves do have quality. They are the only team with two returning 2008 GNAC all-stars.

Back to lead the Wolves are outfielder Jessica Hallmark (5-5, So., Salem, OR – Sprague), who ranked ninth in the conference with a .372 average and had eight home runs and 36 RBI and shortstop Tyler Sutherland (5-4, Jr., Gold Hill, OR – Crater), who finished sixth in the GNAC with a .381 average and had five home runs and 16 RBI.

Both players were first team all-star selections. Another returning all-star is second baseman Amanda Fleer (5-11, Jr., Salem, OR – McKay), who was an honorable mention pick after batting .321 with four home runs and 17 RBI.

WOU had the top-ranked pitching staff in the conference last year with a 1.91 ERA and returns Jessica Wood (5-7, So., The Dalles, OR – The Dalles-Wahtonka), who was 8-2 with a 1.92 ERA. But, the Wolves graduated ace Katie Fleer who was 21-7 in earning *GNAC Pitcher-of-the-Year* honors.

Western Washington, which finished third in the coaches poll, could have the GNAC's best pitching staff this year as they return Jessica Rosencrants (5-8, Sr., Sequim, WA – Peninsula & Southeast Missouri State) and Sarah McEnroe (5-8, Jr., Woodinville, WA) in the circle.

Rosencrants ended up with an 11-7 record and ranked second in ERA with a 1.89 mark a year ago. McEnroe finished eighth in the GNAC with a 2.67 ERA while winning five of 17 decisions.

Rosencrants is one of three returning all-stars for the Vikings, who have a league-best 11 returning letter winners. She was a second-team selection.

Outfielder Michelle Wrigley (5-7, So., Bothell, WA – Inglemoor), who batted .336 and drove in 14 runs, was a first team pick, while first baseman Meghan Flem (6-0, Jr., Hood River, OR – Hood River Valley), who hit .299 and had five home runs and 30 RBI, earned honorable mention honors.

Central Washington, which is ranked fourth in the pre-season poll, also has three returning all-stars – catcher Holly Rossman (5-6, Sr., Olympia, WA – Black Hills & Mount Hood CC), outfielder Ashley Fix (5-6, Jr., Puyallup, WA) and pitcher Linse Vlahovich (5-10, Sr., Spokane, WA – University).

Rossman was the GNAC's No. 4 ranked hitter and one of its top run producers in earning first team honors. She hit .385, drove nine balls out of the park and plated 37 runners.

Fix, a second team selection, batted .313 and drove in 12 runs, while Vlahovich was 10-13 with a 3.16 ERA in earning honorable mention honors.

Saint Martin's which finished fifth in the coaches' poll, returns most of its key players from a year ago, including five all-stars to match MSUB's league-best total.

Shortstop Holly Morris (5-10, Sr., Richland, WA), who batted .347 and led the league in home runs with 13, was a second team pick. Morris also ranked second in RBI with 39 and hit .347.

Outfielder Kristine Kaneshiro (5-5, So., Auburn, WA – Auburn-Riverside), who batted .331 with three home runs and 23 RBI was also a second team selection.

Three players – second baseman Kristi Sigafoos (5-2, Jr., Federal Way, WA – Thomas Jefferson, .261, 4 hr, 23 rbi), pitcher-infielder Brandi Klemm (5-7, So., Everett, WA – Cascade, 6-9, 4.46, .191, 3 hr, 11 rbi) and outfielder Kirstin Davidson (5-8, Jr., Central Point, OR – Crater, .232, 0 hr, 8 rbi) – were all honorable mention selections.

Northwest Nazarene, which hopes to improve on last year's 9-43 record and climb out of the GNAC basement, has seven starters back among eight letter winners, including two all-stars.

Shortstop Haley Hevern (5-4, So., Central Point, OR – Crater, .303, 4 hr, 23 rbi) and outfielder Jael Henthorn (5-3, Sr., Meridian, ID, .280, 0 hr, 4 rbi) each earned honorable mention honors a year ago.

Two of the GNAC teams begin their seasons next week as MSUB and Central Washington travel to Turlock, Calif., to compete in the Cal State Stanislaus Best of the West Invitational (Feb. 6-8). CWU has a pre-tournament game Feb. 5 with Chico State.

Saint Martin's opens its season the following week in Phoenix, Ariz., in the Lead Off Classic (Feb. 13-15).

Northwest Nazarene, Western Oregon and Western Washington don't begin their seasons until the weekend of Feb. 20-22 when the GNAC's 40-game conference schedule begins.

The schedule will eventually determine the GNAC's automatic berth qualifier for the NCAA regionals in May.

The NCAA has revamped its playoff format this year. Instead of one eight-team regional, the top two teams in the regional poll will earn the right if they chose to host two separate four-team regionals May 7-9.

The two regional winners will then play a best-of-three series May 15-16 in the West Super Regional with the winner advancing to the NCAA Division II Elite Eight the following week.

## TEAM PROFILES

### CENTRAL WASHINGTON WILDCATS

**Head Coach:** Dr. Gary Frederick, Central Washington '59 (247-325, 14 years)

**Assistants:** Caitlyn Cornell, Kelli Spaulding, Mallory Holtman

**2008 Record:** 17-27

**Conference:** 12-12, 4<sup>th</sup>

**Returning Letter Winners:** 8

**Returning Starters:** Holly Rossman (C, 5-6, Sr., .385, 9 hr, 37 rbi, 1<sup>st</sup> team GNAC); Ashley Fix (OF, 5-6, Jr., .313, 0 hr, 12 rbi, 2<sup>nd</sup> team GNAC); Linse Vlahovich (P, 5-10, Sr., 10-13, 3.16, HM GNAC); Jackie Hawkins (2B, 5-2, Sr., .229, 1 hr, 9 rbi); Katriina Reime (P, 6-0, Jr., 5-8, 3.04); Liz Wallace (SS, 5-6, Sr., .302, 0 hr, 11 rbi)

**Other Returnees:** Sarah Elledge (OF, 5-7, So., .091); Taylor Trautmann (1B, 5-3, Jr., .000)

### MONTANA STATE BILLINGS

**Head Coach:** Anthony Stone, MSU Billings '02 (28-21, 1 year)

**Assistants:** Lisa Allen, Aaron Jackson

**2008 Record:** 28-21

**Conference:** 16-8, 3<sup>rd</sup>

**Returning Letter Winners:** 10

**Returning Starters:** Leslie Davis (3B, 5-8, Sr., .361, 7 hr, 33 rbi, 1<sup>st</sup> team GNAC); Lisa Moore (P-DH, 5-6, Sr., .274, 2 hr, 12 rbi, 12-5, 2.40, 2<sup>nd</sup> team GNAC); Terina Stacks (1B, 5-7, Sr., .373, 5 hr, 28 rbi, 2<sup>nd</sup> team GNAC); Kelly Parsons (C, 5-7, So., .341, 9 hr, 34 rbi, 2<sup>nd</sup> team GNAC); Stephanie Gosselin (OF, 5-9, Sr., .408, 5 hr, 27 rbi, HM GNAC); Shay Oberg (OF, 5-7, Sr., .280, 3 hr, 13 rbi)

**Other Returnees:** Stevie Howard (2B, 5-2, Jr., .227, 0 hr, 1 rbi); Alyssa Frank (SS, 5-4, So., .103, 0 hr, 1 rbi)

### **NORTHWEST NAZARENE CRUSADERS**

**Head Coach:** Julie Coert, Northwestern Louisiana State, 1995 (60-185, 5 years)

**Assistants:** Kate Seward, Dave Whittinger

**2008 Record:** 9-43

**Conference:** 2-22, 7<sup>th</sup>

**Returning Letter Winners:** 8

**Returning Starters:** Haley Hevern (SS, 5-4, So., .303, 4 hr, 23 rbi, HM GNAC); Jael Henthorn (OF, 5-3, Sr., .280, 0 hr, 4 rbi, HM GNAC); Catherine Lowery (1B, 5-9, So., .200, 1 hr, 4 rbi); Vanessa Shaw (3B, 5-3, Sr., .179, 3 hr, 12 rbi); Cortnee Crane (OF, 5-5, So., .214, 0 hr, 10 rbi); Sarah Varady (OF, 5-5, So., .195, 0 hr, 4 rbi); Dana Shipley (P, 5-6, Jr., 0-21, 8.09)

**Other Returnees:** Brooke Hesselgesser (3B, 5-6, So., .200, 0 hr, 3 rbi)

### **SAINT MARTIN'S SAINTS**

**Head Coach:** Tiffany Qunell (24-58, 2 years)

**Assistants:** Cheryl Zaragoza

**2008 Record:** 21-33

**Conference:** 7-17, 6<sup>th</sup>

**Returning Letter Winners:** 10

**Returning Starters:** Holly Morris (SS, 5-10, Sr., .347, 13 hr, 39 rbi, 2<sup>nd</sup> team GNAC); Kristine Kaneshiro (OF, 5-5, So., .331, 3 hr, 23 rbi, 2<sup>nd</sup> team GNAC); Kristi Sigafos (2B, 5-2, Jr., .261, 4 hr, 23 rbi, HM GNAC); Brandi Klemm (P-2B, 5-7, So., .191, 3 hr, 11 rbi, 6-9, 4.46, HM GNAC); Kirstin Davidson (OF, 5-8, Jr., .232, 0 hr, 8 rbi, HM GNAC); Lisa Holombo (1B, 5-9, Sr., .333, 3 hr, 14 rbi); Danny White (3B, 5-2, So., .170, 0 hr, 2 rbi); Jamie Herrick (P, 5-8, Sr., 6-12, 4.32)

**Other Returnees:** Katie Payne (1B, 5-4, So., .235, 0 hr, 2 rbi); Katee Nauert (OF, 5-5, Sr., .172, 0 hr, 2 rbi)

### **WESTERN OREGON WOLVES**

**Head Coach:** Pam Knox, Cal State Fullerton '80 (135-153, 6 years; Overall, 335-308, 14 years)

**Assistants:** Jami Strinz

**2008 Record:** 33-18

**Conference:** 18-6, 1<sup>st</sup>-T

**Returning Letter Winners:** 8

**Returning Starters:** Jessica Hallmark (OF, 5-5, So., .372, 8 hr, 36 rbi, 1<sup>st</sup> team GNAC); Tyler Sutherland (SS, 5-4, Jr., .381, 5 hr, 16 rbi, 1<sup>st</sup> team GNAC); Amanda Fleer (2B, 5-11, Jr., .321, 4 hr, 17 rbi, HM GNAC); Jessica Wood (P, 5-7, So., 8-2, 1.92)

**Other Returnees:** Tierra Cuba (1B, 5-7, So., .318, 0 hr, 1 rbi); Krysta Pennington (3B, 5-6, Jr., .253, 1 hr, 10 rbi); Miranda Little (C, 5-5, Jr., .200, 0 hr, 3 rbi); Sasha Koki (3B, 5-3, So., .000)

### **WESTERN WASHINGTON VIKINGS**

**Head Coach:** Lonnie Hicks (180-154, 7 years)

**Assistants:** Dan Sperl, Liza Teichler

**2008 Record:** 24-24

**Conference:** 11-13, 5<sup>th</sup>

**Returning Letter Winners:** 11

**Returning Starters:** Michelle Wrigley (UT, 5-7, So., .336, 0 hr, 14 rbi, 1<sup>st</sup> team GNAC); Jessica Rosencrants (P, 5-8, Sr., 11-7, 1.89, 2<sup>nd</sup> team GNAC); Meghan Flem (1B, 6-0, Jr., .299, 5 hr, 30 rbi, HM GNAC); Kelsey Anderson (OF-3B, 5-1, So., .248, 0 hr, 14 rbi); Samantha Rutherford (C-UT, 5-4, So., .247, 2 hr, 10 rbi); Jenna Mohrweis (OF, 5-3, So., .216, 0 hr, 5 rbi); Caitlin Dotlich (SS, 5-6, So., .191, 2 hr, 14 rbi); Sarah McEnroe (P, 5-8, Jr., 5-12, 2.67)

**Other Returnees:** Hannah Becker (C, 5-11, So., .264, 4 hr, 19 rbi in 2007); Morgan Parkerson (OF, 5-8, Sr., .200, 0 hr, 5 rbi); Hilary Cosentino (OF, 5-5, So., .133, 0 hr, 3 rbi)