



@BigWestWSOC

BIG WEST WOMEN'S SOCCER

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For Immediate Release - Thursday, August 11, 2016

Long Beach State Selected First In Big West Women's Soccer Preseason Poll

IRVINE, CA – Long Beach State has been selected the preseason favorite to capture the 2016 Big West women's soccer title.

After earning a share of the 2015 regular season title, the 49ers received six first-place votes in ballots among the league's nine head coaches for a total of 77 points. UC Santa Barbara received two first-place votes of its own on the way to 69 points, while CSUN collected 53 points and the final first-place nod. Cal State Fullerton, the reigning Big West Tournament champion, finished out the top four teams with 53 points as well.

Cal Poly (39 points), UC Riverside (36), UC Irvine (35), UC Davis (30) and Hawai'i (13) round out the voting in this year's preseason poll.

With coach Mauricio Ingrassia at the helm, the 49ers return 17 letterwinners and eight starters from the 2015 squad that shared a conference regular-season title after going 12-7-3 overall. LBSU made its fifth NCAA Tournament appearance in eight years and finished 6-2-0 in league play. Four players return for the 49ers who received All-Conference accolades last season including seniors **Ashton McKeown** and **Mimi Rangel**, junior **Ashley Gonzales** and sophomore **Rocio Rodriguez**. The upperclassmen are expected to anchor Long Beach State's quest for back-to-back Big West crowns while looking to improve upon its 12-7-5 mark in league since 2013. Among the senior class of five is goalkeeper Ashton McKeown, a two-time all-conference honoree and 2014 Big West Goalkeeper of the Year. McKeown recorded a 0.62 goals against average in 2015, which ranked fifth-best in the Big West record book in a single season. The senior also led the league with a .848 save percentage and her 10 goals against was second best in conference. The goalkeeper helped LBSU record 12 shutouts in the 2015 campaign, the most of any team in the league, and the third-most in a single season in conference history. McKeown enters her final collegiate campaign ranked in the top-three in Long Beach State history with 18 shutouts (2nd), a 0.81 GAA (2nd) and 151 saves (3rd).

2015 Big West Freshman of the Year **Mallory Hromatko**, the first Gaucho since 2007 to earn top rookie distinction, highlights UC Santa Barbara's returning cast. The rising sophomore ranked third in the league a year ago in goals (9) and points (24) while adding six assists for UCSB. Hromatko also broke into the Big West record book with five game winning goals, the 13th-best mark all-time. After earning a share of the conference regular season title going 6-2-0 in league, the Gauchos look to improve upon their 13-6-1 overall mark.

CSUN looks to claim its first regular season title in program history and will look to returnee **Cynthia Sanchez** to lead the way. Sanchez was second in the league with 11 goals and third in points with 25 a year ago, leading CSUN to a 11-8-1 campaign for a 4-3-1 mark in league. Also returning to the pitch is senior **Kourtney Kutscher**, who led the Matadors with a .231 shot percentage last season. The senior recorded six goals and two assists for 14 points.

Coach Demian Brown and his Titans made history last year, earning their third Big West Tournament title in as many years. It marked the second time in program history CSF won three consecutive tournament titles (2005-07, 2013-15) and Fullerton remains the only program in conference history to accomplish the feat. The Titans also earned a share of the 2015 regular season title and will bring back key returners from that squad in senior goalkeeper **Jennifer Stuart** and junior midfielder **Connie Caliz**.

The coaches also voted for a 11-player preseason all-conference team that revealed top talent throughout the league with representation from seven different programs. Long Beach State (**Ashley Gonzales**, **Ashton McKeown**, **Mimi Rangel**) placed three while UC Santa Barbara (**Amanda Ball**, **Mallory Hromatko**) and CSUN (**Kourtney Kutscher**, **Cynthia Sanchez**) had two. Cal Poly's **Megan Abutin**, UC Riverside's **Blanca Barrio**, Cal State Fullerton's **Connie Caliz** and UC Irvine's **Kiana Palacios** rounded out the list.

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2016 Big West Women's Soccer Preseason Coaches Poll

No.	School	Pts.
1.	Long Beach State (6)	77
2.	UC Santa Barbara (2)	69
3.	CSUN (1)	53
	Cal State Fullerton	53
5.	Cal Poly	39
6.	UC Riverside	36
7.	UC Irvine	35
8.	UC Davis	30
9.	Hawai'i	13

() First-place votes

2016 Big West Women's Soccer Preseason All-Conference Team

Name	School	Pos.	Year
Megan Abutin	Cal Poly	MF	Senior
Amanda Ball	UC Santa Barbara	F	Junior
Blanca Barrio	UC Riverside	MF	Senior
Connie Caliz	Cal State Fullerton	MF	Junior
Ashley Gonzales	Long Beach State	F	Junior
Mallory Hromatko	UC Santa Barbara	MF	Sophomore
Kourtney Kutscher	CSUN	F	Senior
Ashton McKeown	Long Beach State	GK	Senior
Kiana Palacios	UC Irvine	F	Junior
Mimi Rangel	Long Beach State	MF	Senior
Cynthia Sanchez	CSUN	F	Junior