



2017-18 Big West Women's Basketball

Big West Conference - 2 Corporate Park, Suite 206, Irvine, CA 92606

Information Staff: Chris Hargraves (Women's Basketball Contact)

Phone: (949) 261-2525 • **Fax:** (949) 261-2528 • **email:** chargraves@bigwest.org

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UC Davis the Preseason Favorite for Women's Hoops Crown

IRVINE, Calif. – Coming off a 25-win campaign and with the bulk of its lineup intact, UC Davis was named the preseason favorite by the coaches and media for the 2017-18 Big West women's basketball title.

The Aggies, who are the defending Big West regular season champion, received six first place votes from the coaches and sixteen first place votes from the media on the way to the top spots. UCD returns a pair of first team All-Conference players in junior Morgan Bertsch (15.8 ppg, 5.2 rpg, 1.7 bpg) and senior Pele Gianotti (11.2 ppg, 5.8 rpg). The squad also returns its other three starters in second team All-Big West honoree senior Dani Nafekh (11.0 ppg, 46.2 3PT%) junior Kourtney Eaton (6.8 ppg, 4.4 apg) and senior Rachel Nagel (9.9 ppg, 4.3 rpg, 38.7 3PT%). In all, 10 letterwinners return from a squad that went 14-2 in Big West play and advanced to the third round of the WNIT a year ago. The experience should pay off against a difficult non-conference schedule highlighted by home games against Washington State and rival Sacramento State as well as road contests against Pacific, Seattle, Oregon State and Saint Mary's among others.

CSUN was slotted second by both the coaches and media, earning two first place votes in each poll. The Matadors return the top player in the league in reigning Big West Player of the Year and first team All-Big West selection Channon Fluker (18.0 ppg, 12.0 rpg, 2.3 bpg). A year ago, the then-sophomore became the first player since 1992 and just the second overall to lead the league in scoring, rebounding and blocks. She was also fourth in the nation in double-doubles (21) and third in rebounding. CSUN also returns last season's Freshman of the Year in Eliza Matthews (4.6 ppg, 6.9 rpg) and a second team All-Big West choice Serafina Maulupe (13.5 ppg, 81 3PT). After a rough start to the campaign, CSUN rebounded to finish 18-14 including a 10-3 record from January 25 to the end of the season. With four starters and 10 letterwinners returning, the Matadors will be a tough opponent as they seek to reclaim the Big West title.

A team on the rise earned the third spot in both polls as UC Santa Barbara garnered the acclaim from the coaches and media. The Gauchos come into the season with momentum as it earned a berth in the Big West Tournament title game in just the second season under Bonnie Henrickson. The club is led by senior Drew Edelman (11.7 ppg, 7.7 rpg, 61.4 FG%), a second team All-Big West selection a year ago. UCSB can also count on the contributions of junior Sarah Porter (10.2 ppg, 41.1 3PT%), honorable mention All-Big West pick senior Drea Toler (10.2 ppg, 4.6 apg) and junior Coco Miller (9.1 ppg, 3.4 rpg, 2.1 apg). UC Santa Barbara went 16-16 on its way to the Big West Tournament championship game last season, which included an upset win in the Tournament semifinals against top-seeded UC Davis. A difficult non-conference slate awaits the '17-18 Gauchos, including road matchups against Texas A&M, Pittsburgh, Pepperdine and USC.

Hawai'i completed the top half of both polls as it came in fourth in the coaches and tied for fourth in the media. UH returns a blue chip player in first team All-Big West honoree senior Sarah Toeaina (13.5 ppg, 5.2 rpg, 109 FTM). Toeaina showed her relentless game a year ago as she was responsible for nearly 30% of the Rainbow Wahine's total free throw attempts. The 'Bows also have a rising star in sophomore Makenna Woodfolk (5.3 ppg, 6.0 rpg) along with junior Lahni Salanoa (7.1 ppg, 4.2 rpg) and junior Olivia Crawford (8.2 ppg, 2.1 apg) leading nice mix of veterans and youngsters. Keep an eye on Arizona State transfer Tia Kanoa, a Honolulu native returning home to play for UH.

The media and coaches also chose a six-woman All-Conference team, with five players appearing on both lists. Bertsch, Edelman, Fluker and Toeaina join Cal Poly's Lynn Leaupepe on both lists. The Mustangs' Lynn Leaupepe is on the final member of the media list, while UC Davis' Gianotti earned the final spot on the coaches preseason team.

The full coaches and media poll results are available on the following page.

Coaches Poll Results

1. UC Davis (6)	77
2. CSUN (2)	69
3. UC Santa Barbara	63
4. Hawai'i	49
5. UC Riverside	46
6. Cal Poly (1)	44
7. Long Beach State	25
8. UC Irvine	24
9. Cal State Fullerton	9

() First-place votes

Media Poll Results

1. UC Davis (16)	166
2. CSUN (2)	148
3. UC Santa Barbara	112
4. Hawai'i	98
Cal Poly	98
6. UC Riverside	91
7. Long Beach State (1)	81
8. UC Irvine	37
9. Cal State Fullerton	24

() First-place votes

Preseason Coaches All-Conference Team

Name	School	Pos.	Year	Hometown
Morgan Bertsch	UC Davis	F	Jr.	Santa Rosa, Calif.
Drew Edelman	UC Santa Barbara	F	Sr.	Sunnyvale, Calif.
Pele Gianotti	UC Davis	F	Sr.	Myrtle Creek, Ore.
Channon Fluker	CSUN	C	Jr.	Pasadena, Calif.
Lynn Leaupepe	Cal Poly	G	Sr.	Camarillo, Calif.
Sarah Toeaina	Hawai'i	G	Sr.	Covington, Wash.

Preseason Media All-Conference Team

Name	School	Pos.	Year	Hometown
Morgan Bertsch	UC Davis	F	Jr.	Santa Rosa, Calif.
Drew Edelman	UC Santa Barbara	F	Sr.	Sunnyvale, Calif.
Channon Fluker	CSUN	C	Jr.	Pasadena, Calif.
Dynn Leaupepe	Cal Poly	G	Sr.	Camarillo, Calif.
Lynn Leaupepe	Cal Poly	G	Sr.	Camarillo, Calif.
Sarah Toeaina	Hawai'i	G	Sr.	Covington, Wash.