



BIG SKY CONFERENCE
2491 WASHINGTON BLVD, SUITE 201
OGDEN, UT, 84401

CONTACT: ALYSSA ASKEW
MEDIA RELATIONS ASSISTANT
801.392.1978 x-12
AASKEW@BIGSKYCONFERENCE.ORG



FACEBOOK.COM/BIGSKYCONF



TWITTER.COM/BIGSKYCONF

PORTLAND STATE SLIGHT FAVORITE OVER WEBER STATE

Ogden, Utah (August 6, 2014) - The Big Sky soccer coaches have selected Portland State as a slight favorite over Weber State to win the 2014 championship.

Coaches were not allowed to vote for their own team in the preseason poll, which was released Wednesday by the league office.

Portland State was picked to finish first after receiving five first-place votes for a total of 93 points. After going 8-0-1 in conference last year, Portland State hosted the 2014 championship. PSU fell short of winning its first Big Sky conference championship after losing to Weber State in the finals, 0-0, 3-0 in a shootout. The Vikings beat Northern Colorado 2-0 in the semifinals.

Portland State returns 10 starters and 17 letterwinners from the 2013 squad, including three players who received All-Big Sky first-team honors. The 2014 Big Sky Defensive MVP, Kayla Henningsen and the co-Goalkeeper of the Year Caitlin Plese are among those returning. Head coach Laura Schott has been the PSU coach since 2008. Under Schott's reign the Vikings haven't lost more than two conference games in a season. Schott was named Big Sky Coach of the Year in 2009 and 2013.

Weber State was picked to finish second with five first-place votes and 92 total points, just one point shy of first. Weber State finished the 2013 season with a 10-5-5 overall record. After going 5-2-2 in conference, Weber State finished tied for third, earning the No. 3 seed in the conference tournament. The Wildcats defeated Northern Arizona before topping Portland State in the championship. WSU advanced to the NCAA Tournament for the first time since the 2005 season. Weber State lost in the first round, 4-0 to BYU. The Wildcats will be returning nine starters from the 2013 season. Among the starters returning are the 2013 Big Sky Offensive MVP and co-Golden Boot award winner, Makenzie Harrison and two-time First Team selections in Harrison, Brecken Holbrook and Chansi Crompton.

Northern Arizona was picked to finish third with one first-place vote and 86 total points. In 2013, Northern Arizona finished 7-2-0 in conference and earned the No. 2 seed in the Big Sky Championship. The Lumberjacks lost in the semifinals to Weber State. NAU will be returning seven starters. The 2013 co-Golden Boot award winner Cierra Gamble is among the seven starters returning for the Lumberjacks.

Northern Colorado was picked to finish fourth with 69 points. Northern Colorado finished the 2013 season tied for third overall with a 5-2-2 conference record, giving it the No. 4 seed in the Championship. The Bears fell in the semifinals to host, Portland State. Northern Colorado lost the 2013 co-Goalkeeper of the Year and two-time First Team selection in Natalie D'Adamio to graduation.

- More -

Montana was picked to finish fifth with 62 points. In 2013, UM finished 3-5-1 in conference tying for sixth. The Grizzlies return six starters including Brooke Moody, a Big Sky Second Team selection. Montana is looking to get back into the conference championship after missing the 2013 championship.

Idaho State finished sixth with 52 points. ISU finished fifth last year with a 4-3-2 conference record. The Bengals hosted the 2012 championship, but missed the 2013 championship by three points.

Sacramento State was picked seventh with 51 points. The Hornets finished the 2013 season 3-5-1, tying for sixth. SAC is looking to return to the conference tournament for the first time since 2010.

Southern Utah finished eighth with 32 points. The Thunderbirds finished the 2013 conference season with a 3-5-1 record. Having only been in the league for two years, SUU is looking to make the conference tournament for the first time.

Idaho, the newest member of the conference, was picked to finish ninth with 29 points. The Vandals finished the 2012 season 4-16-0.

Rounding out the poll are Eastern Washington and North Dakota. Eastern Washington was picked 10th with 27 points, and North Dakota finished 11th with 12 points. Eastern Washington finished the conference season 1-8-0, tying for ninth. North Dakota earned its first Big Sky win in a 3-1 win over Eastern Washington and finished the season with a 1-8-0 conference record.

The first regular season matches start August 22, with the first conference matches starting Sept. 26.

For the first time in league history, six teams will advance to the Big Sky soccer championship. At the end of the conference season, the top six teams will advance to the Big Sky Championship which is Nov. 6-9, and hosted by the regular-season champion.

Preseason Soccer Poll

Team	Points
1. Portland State	93 (5)
2. Weber State	92 (5)
3. Northern Arizona	86 (1)
4. Northern Colorado	69
5. Montana	62
6. Idaho State	52
7. Sacramento State	51
8. Southern Utah	32
9. Idaho	29
10. Eastern Washington	27
11. North Dakota	12

(Number of first place votes in parentheses)