



GULF SOUTH CONFERENCE

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GSC ANNOUNCES 2013 TOP TEN HONOREES

Birmingham, AL—The Gulf South Conference is proud to announce its 17th annual GSC “Top Ten” Award winners.

These awards, based on athletic, academic and extracurricular achievement during the 2012-13 academic year, recognize the top five male and top five female student-athletes as the cream of the GSC crop. This year, six female members were selected due to an impressive pool of candidates. The top male and female receive the Commissioner’s Trophy, the Conference’s most prestigious honor.

The presentations will be made at the GSC’s Annual Awards Banquet, Monday, June 24, at the Hilton Birmingham Perimeter Park starting at 6:30 pm. The Conference will reveal the winners of the Commissioner’s Trophies, recognize its All-Sports Trophy Champions (men: Valdosta State/West Florida; women: West Florida) and bid farewell to departing administrators: **University of West Georgia President Dr. Beheruz N. Sethna** and **Valdosta State University Faculty Athletic Representative Bobby Tucker**.

The “Top Ten” are selected with the assistance of an advisory committee representing the ADs, SWAs, SIDs, FARs and Presidents from randomly selected GSC schools, which makes a recommendation to the Commissioner, who has the final decision. Ties are not broken, so more than ten student-athletes can be honored.

Four seniors highlight the six women’s winners: **Nikki Brown** (North Alabama, Soccer, Bognot Regis, England), **Morgan Johnson** (Valdosta State, Softball, Macon, GA), **Monica Malavassi** (West Florida, Soccer, San Jose, Costa Rica) and **Kelsey Miles** (Christian Brothers, Volleyball, Cordova, TN). Completing the list are juniors, **Mary Kelley** (Alabama Huntsville, Softball, Mobile, AL) and **Anna Shartzner** (West Alabama, Softball, Gulf Shores, AL).

Brown is just the second *three-time Top Ten winner in league history*, following former Henderson State standout Valerie Brummal who claimed three in a row from 1997-99. Kelly and Johnson are back from the 2012 list, while Morgan Johnson also seeks to become just the *sixth student-athlete to win back-to-back Commissioner’s Trophies* dating back to 1987. Malavassi is UWF’s third consecutive Top Ten women’s winner and first soccer player since Courtney Jones in 2009. Miles is CBU’s first women’s honoree since 2006 when fellow volleyball star Laura Washington took home accolades. Shartzner will become first UWA female to take the podium since Lisa Wipperfurth was part of the inaugural “Top Ten/Top Eight” class in 1996-97.

All five male “Top Ten” winners are seniors: **Tyler Aldridge** (Delta State, Baseball, Steens, MS), **Kevin Ducros** (West Florida, Tennis, Aix-en-Provence, France), **Ryan Schraeder** (Valdosta State, Football, Wichita, KS), **David Skull** (Christian Brothers, Soccer, Adelaide, Australia) and **Jaime Smith** (Alabama Huntsville, Basketball, Birmingham, AL).

Aldridge is DSU’s second straight winner and first baseball standout since Craig Newton in 2005. Ducros moves UWF’s streak of men’s honorees to three and he follows last year’s former tennis teammate Sean Gunnels. VSU advanced its fourth men’s winner in five years, but Ryan Schraeder is the first Blazer football Top Ten winner since Dusty Bonner in 2001. David Skull marks the first CBU men’s honoree since 2009 and its first soccer winner since Matt Werakso in 2007. Smith joined former teammate, and 2011 honoree, Josh Magette as a UAH men’s basketball Top Ten winner and also upped the Chargers Top Ten streak to four.

PROFILES OF “TOP TEN” WINNERS ON NEXT SIX PAGES



Tyler Aldridge, Delta State University
Baseball/Third Base
Senior/Steens, Miss.
Exercise Science, Sports Management
3.18 Overall G.P.A.

Tyler Aldridge turned in a stellar senior season with **Delta State University** in 2013. He started the year setting a DSU record with a 28-game hitting streak and finished third in the Gulf South Conference in batting with a .384 batting average. Aldridge racked up a Conference-best 84 hits on the year, including 10 doubles, two triples and one home run. He also sported a .452 on-base percentage, which was good for fourth in the GSC.

The Steens, Miss., native, earned many accolades this season on the field and in the classroom, earning him the Charles S. Kerg Senior Student-Athlete of the Year Award. He was also named First Team All-GSC, earned a spot on the NCAA All-South Region Tournament Team, was a First Team All-South Region honoree by Rawlings/ABCA, First Team All-South Region by Daktronics and First Team All-South by the NCBWA. He was also recognized nationally as a Rawlings/ABCA All-America honoree (Third Team) and as a Daktronics All-America Honorable Mention. Aldridge's 3.18 GPA placed him on the GSC Academic Honor Roll and he left DSU with a degree in Exercise Science with a second field in Sports Management.

Outside of the classroom and off the field, Aldridge donated his time with many community outreach programs. He was a volunteer at multiple Cleveland, Miss.-based retirement homes, was a member of a reading to children initiative and participated in various canned food drives.



Nikki Brown, University of North Alabama
Women's Soccer/Midfield
Senior/Bognor Regis, England
Physical Education
3.77 Overall G.P.A.

University of North Alabama senior Nikki Brown returns to the Top Ten podium for the third year in a row, becoming just the second student-athlete in GSC history to win three Top Ten trophies. The Bognor Regis, England native follows former Henderson State standout Valerie Brummal who took home three straight Top Eight trophies from 1997-19.

Brown fought through injuries during the entire 2012 season, finishing with 11 points behind two goals and seven assists. Her seven assists tied her for sixth in the Gulf South Conference, while she also was sixth in the GSC with an .053 assists-per-game average. A four-year starter, she appeared in 81 matches, including 78 starts, as UNA posted a 63-16-3 record over that span. Her 51 career assists is a UNA record.

Brown, a team captain, was named to the All-GSC Second Team and to the All-South Region Third Team by the NSCAA. She also earned All-GSC Tournament Team recognition by helping lead UNA to the GSC Title Game against the University of West Florida. She was awarded with the University of North Alabama Female Student-Athlete of the Year Award because of her work on the field and in the classroom, carrying a 3.77 GPA as a Physical Education major. Her academic success also earned her Phi Kappa Phi Honor Society status and a spot on the GSC All-Academic Team.

Brown's off-campus work includes a reading initiative at a local elementary school, coaching a middle school soccer team and volunteering with the local Special Olympics.

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**Kevin Ducros, University of West Florida
Men's Tennis/No. 1 Singles and Doubles
Senior/Aix-en-Provence, France
Business Management, MBA
3.22 Overall G.P.A.**

Kevin Ducros is one of the most highly decorated student-athletes to compete at the **University of West Florida** in the past decade, but his accomplishments did not stop there, extending to the classroom and the local community.

While the Aix-en-Provence, France native made an immediate all-star impact on the tennis court when he came to Pensacola five years ago, Ducros had to overcome adversity to continue his success and earn his degree.

Ducros' first two years at UWF were headlined by GSC Freshman of the Year laurels in 2009 and All-Region status in Singles and Doubles action in 2009 and 2010. He was also a two-time Singles All-American and a Doubles All-American in 2010. His championship spirit was tested during his junior year when he suffered a season-ending knee injury and the doctors were doubtful if he could return to the same competitive abilities going forward.

Ducros fought through a difficult 12 months before returning to action in the 2012 season where he returned to the top of his game, earning All-America Singles and Doubles honors in 2012 and 2013. This past year was extremely special when he was named the ITA South Region Senior Player of the Year and he also became just the 18th player in the Conference history to be named to the All-GSC four times in a career.

Ducros did not let his athletic challenges effect his academic focus, as he graduated with a bachelor's degree in the fall of 2012 and maintained a 3.22 cumulative grade-point-average after one semester of graduate school in the West Florida Business Management program. He was a unanimous selection for the 2013 GSC All-Academic Team and was tabbed to the UWF Dean's List in 2012.

Off the court, Ducros volunteered at numerous charity events, including the past four annual Pensacola Autism Association community fundraisers. He also participated in the annual Pensacola Pink Ribbon Tennis Tournament, which is held to promote breast cancer awareness, and the Pensacola Sports Association's Racquet Roundup clinic for children ages 6-12. Ducros moved over to the soccer pitch as well, volunteering as a coach for local children's soccer teams by scheduling matches, coordinating referees and field use and organizing training and practices.

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Morgan Johnson, Valdosta State University
Softball/Outfield
Senior/Macon, Ga.
Nursing
3.69 Overall G.P.A.

The repeat did not happen for **Morgan Johnson** on the softball diamond as **Valdosta State University** came up just short in its bid to win back-to-back national championships. Still, Johnson has an opportunity to pull off a repeat as a Commissioner's Trophy winner after earning the title in 2012.

Johnson, a senior from Macon, Ga., helped Valdosta State to a second consecutive trip to the Division II Championships after the Blazers won the national title in 2012. She hit .374 with 12 home runs and 49 runs batted in as VSU's No. 2 hitter. She was named an All-American by Daktronics (First Team) and the NFCA (Third Team), a two-time Player of the Week selection in 2013 and was picked for the All-GSC First Team. This season, she was among the top five in the league in home runs (second), slugging percentage (.693, 3rd), on-base percentage (.475, 4th), runs scored (55, 4th) and walks (33, 2nd).

Academically, Johnson achieved a 3.69 overall grade point average in Nursing and earned Academic All-Region honors while being chosen for several honors societies, including the International Dean's List and Alpha Chi Honor Society. She was also selected to the GSC All-Academic Team for the second consecutive year.

Johnson is just as serious about winning in the community as she does on the field and in the classroom. Despite her demanding athletic and academic schedules, she logged more than 70 hours of community service. She organized and conducted free softball clinics for young children and helped organize the VSU Softball Blood Drive that was the second-largest blood drive in South Georgia over the past 12 months. She assisted with pet adoptions at a local animal shelter and volunteered at the Heart Health Expo, monitoring blood pressure for attendees.

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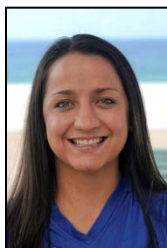
Mary Kelley, University of Alabama in Huntsville
Softball/Outfield
Junior/Mobile, Ala.
Business Administration, Management
3.57 Overall G.P.A.

In her three seasons at **Alabama Huntsville**, **Mary Kelley** has done a lot of winning. To stand out for doing such winning in a program – and school – that is accustomed to perennial success, has allowed Kelley to become a Top Ten selection for a second consecutive year.

Kelley, a junior, continues to make a huge impact on the field for the Chargers. For the third consecutive year, she has earned All-American status, this time as a Daktronics Third Team selection. She was also a NFCA First Team All-South Region selection and All-GSC First Team pick. This year, Kelley finished the season hitting .394 with six home runs and 55 runs batted in. She led the GSC in triples (seven) and was in the top five of nearly every offensive category including average (fifth), RBI (third), slugging percentage (.678, 5th), on-base percentage (.493, 2nd), runs scored (62, 3rd), doubles (19, 3rd), hits (71, 3rd), stolen bases (18, 5th) and hit by pitches (12, 2nd) as UAH was one win short of advancing to the Division II Championships for the second time in her three seasons.

Balancing her athletic prowess with her academic abilities, the Mobile, Ala., native was selected by CoSIDA to the Capital One Academic All-District Team for the second straight year, and the finance major was also a GSC All-Academic Team honoree for the second time, while landing on the conference's Academic Honor Roll for the third straight year.

In her free time Kelley has been a strong member of the community, performing numerous charitable acts. She has volunteered for her church's prison outreach ministry and assisted with a program that provides meals to children in the Huntsville area. She has also joined with her teammates in raising money for the Make-a-Wish Foundation, and assisted in UAH's annual Girls in Science and Engineering Day, helping to encourage and inspire girls in grades 3-5 in the disciplines of science, technology, engineering and mathematics.



Monica Malavassi, University of West Florida
Women's Soccer/Midfield
Senior/San Jose, Costa Rica
Elementary Education
3.66 Overall G.P.A.

Hailing from San Jose, Costa Rica, **Monica Malavassi** earned her degree in Elementary Education from the **University of West Florida**. She helped UWF to a Gulf South Conference Championship as well as an NCAA Division II Championship in 2012. Malavassi led the team with a .368 shot percentage and finished fourth on the team in points, with 18 (seven goals, four assists).

Malavassi was named Second Team All-GSC and also earned a spot on the All-Region Second Team by Daktronics. The team captain carried a 3.66 GPA and earned a spot on the GSC All-Academic Team as well as the CoSIDA All-District Academic Team. She was also featured as a "Who's Who" among students in American universities and colleges.

On-campus work was a plenty for Malavassi as she volunteered at monthly soccer clinics, was a Leader of the Fellowship of Christian Athletes and helped organize an equipment drive for Haitian children after an earthquake devastated the country. Her off-campus accolades include her volunteership in soccer consultation in her native Costa Rica. Because of her efforts, five Costa Rican student-athletes were able to receive scholarships to American universities.

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Kelsey Miles, Christian Brothers University
Volleyball/Setter
Senior/Cordova, Tenn.
Natural Science, Behavioral Science
3.70 Overall G.P.A.

When the history of **Christian Brothers** volleyball is written, **Kelsey Miles'** name will be an integral part of the story. After arriving at a program that had just one winning record in 14 years of GSC competition, Miles' three-year run coincided with three winning records, three GSC Tournament appearances and two NCAA Tournament appearances, including the school's first wins in both the GSC and NCAA tournaments.

Miles, a senior from Cordova, Tenn., was the top setter in the GSC in 2012. She finished with more than 1,300 assists and was the only player in the conference to average more than 10 assists per set. She was also third in the conference with 45 service aces. She was an AVCA Honorable Mention All-South Region pick, named to the NCAA South Region All-Tournament Team and was selected to the GSC First Team for the second straight season.

Academically, Miles maintained stellar marks with a 3.70 grade point average as she pursued her degree in Natural Science. She was on the GSC All-Academic Team for the second straight season and made the GSC Honor Roll for the third time.

Also, Miles gave freely of her time to several causes outside of her athletic and academic commitments. She led the volleyball team's Make-a-Wish fundraiser, volunteered as an assistant coach during the summer for St. Benedict High School, and she has been a volunteer at LeBonheur Children's Hospital in Memphis.



Ryan Schraeder, Valdosta State University
Football/Offensive Tackle
Senior/Wichita, Kan.
Interdisciplinary Studies
3.07 Overall G.P.A.

Becoming a three-time All-American is not an unheard of accomplishment in football. But when a student-athlete has only played organized football for three years and still voted among the best in the nation after each season, then everyone has to take notice.

Ryan Schraeder finished his career at **Valdosta State University** as a two-time All-American offensive tackle after posting another All-American effort in 2010 at the junior college level. The Wichita, Kan. native took to the offensive line like a duck takes to water and capped his two-year career in VSU by leading the Blazers to the 2012 NCAA Division II National Championship.

Schraeder anchored one of the best offensive lines in the nation which led the way for a Valdosta State offense that ranked No.1 in the GSC in scoring (41.6), total offense (469.4), passing (250.4), pass efficiency (154.3), first downs (21.6) and third-down conversions (47.1). For his efforts, the senior was a unanimous All-American choice by D2Football.com, the American Football Coaches Association, *Don Hansen's Football Gazette*, AP Little and Daktronics. He did not stop there, earning a runner-up finish for the Gene Upshaw Award, given to the best offensive or defensive lineman in the country.

Academically, Schraeder carried a 3.07 G.P.A. as an Interdisciplinary Studies major which landed him on the GSC Fall Academic Honor Roll. The Valdosta State Male Student-Athlete of the Year played a key part in the team's community service efforts. He was instrumental in the organization of Valdosta State's annual football blood drive, which collected 485 pints of blood, the largest blood drive in South Georgia. Schraeder also volunteered with the Children's Miracle Network, participating in activities with special needs children. He received exciting news regarding his professional career, signing a free agent contract with the Atlanta Falcons in April.

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Anna Shartzter, University of West Alabama
Softball/First Base
Junior/Gulf Shores, Ala.
Elementary Education
3.48 Overall G.P.A.

It was former President Theodore Roosevelt who coined the phrase “Speak softly and carry a big stick.” The **University of West Alabama’s Anna Shartzter**, while not currently a politician, uses that phrase to the best of her ability on and off the softball diamond.

This season, Shartzter – a junior – embodied a team leader on the field for the Tigers. West Alabama was one of the top hitting teams in Division II and as the leadoff hitter, Shartzter set the table for the potent offense. She led UWA, and was seventh in the Gulf South Conference, with a .380 batting average while adding three home runs and 28 runs batted in. Her defense at first base was flawless as well, committing just five errors in nearly 350 chances. She was a First Team All-GSC member and was a NFCA and Daktronics First Team All-Region selection as she helped UWA make a third consecutive NCAA Division II South Region Tournament appearance.

Off the field, Shartzter has maintained her focus in the classroom. For the third time, she was on the GSC Honor Roll with a 3.48 grade point average as she continues working towards her degree in elementary education. She was also inducted into Chi Alpha Sigma, a national collegiate athlete honor society, and named to the school’s President’s List for the third time. She has also been impactful in the UWA community, volunteering her time with several causes, including Relay for Life, the Friends for Jaclyn Foundation, the YMCA, and as a Ronald McDonald House ambassador.

On the field, Shartzter is one whose play has been a big factor in West Alabama’s success. But there is little question that off the field, she has gone to bat in the classroom and in the community to make herself – and the UWA community – a winner as well.



David Skull, Christian Brothers University
Men’s Soccer/Defender
Senior/Adelaide, Australia
Psychology
3.67 Overall G.P.A.

Graduating from **Christian Brothers University** with a degree in Psychology is **David Skull**. The Adelaide, Australia native registered five points (two goals, one assist) as a defender in his senior season and helped lead CBU to another Gulf South Conference Men’s Soccer Championship in 2012.

Skull earned spots on the All-GSC First Team, All-GSC Tournament Team and placed on the Daktronics All-Region Second Team. His 3.67 GPA and having graduated Magna Cum Laude contributed to his All-GSC Academic Team and CoSIDA Academic All-District First Team laurels. He also received CBU Presidential Recognition for his work both on and off the field.

Skull was a campus resident assistant from 2011-13 and earned Resident Assistant of the Year in 2012. He organized various student-life events such as, table tennis tournaments and student cookouts. His off-campus work is nothing short of amazing. He organized and carried out CBU’s campus-wide Goodwill donation program, helped build houses for hurricane relief in partnership with Habitat for Humanity, participated in the Polar Bear Plunge to help raise money for the Special Olympics of Greater Memphis and coordinated soccer team fundraisers for the Make-A-Wish Foundation.

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Jaime Smith, University of Alabama in Huntsville
Men's Basketball/Guard
Senior/Birmingham, Ala.
Business Administration, Information Systems
3.16 Overall G.P.A.

Alabama Huntsville Chargers' basketball runs deep in the Smith family. So it was no surprise that **Jaime Smith** chose to follow his older brother's Joe and Jason to play for the Blue-and-White in 2009. What may have surprised some though is the impressive four-year career that the youngest Smith son put together.

The Birmingham, Ala. native picked up the Smith torch at Spragins Hall, finishing seventh in the GSC Record Books in scoring (1,980 points) and free throw percentage (85.5) and third in free throws made (577), three-pointers made (305) and three-pointers attempted (716).

Smith capped his senior season, leading the GSC in three-pointers made (79) and assists (148) and ranking second in scoring (18.5). He was tabbed All-American by the Daktronics, the NABC and the *Division II Bulletin* and claimed Player of the Year laurels by the GSC head coaches and the Daktronics South Region voters. The two-time 2013 GSC Player of the Week continued to add to his trophy case earlier this month after being named the Alabama Small College Athlete of the Year.

The team captain helped guide the UAH program to new heights during his four years, amassing 106 victories, four consecutive GSC regular season crowns, fourth straight NCAA South Region appearances led by two Regional Titles.

Smith was a GSC Academic Honor Roll member, carrying a 3.17 G.P.A. as Business Administration and Information Systems major and he claimed the UAH Bronze Academic Award for a G.P.A. over 3.0. He served as the team's SAAC member for 2012 and 2013 and was active in Make-A-Wish Foundation efforts. Smith's other off-campus efforts included participation in the Read Across America program and running numerous basketball camps for children.

OTHER "TOP TEN" NOMINEES

Delta State

Kendall Sizemore, Softball

Senior; Cleveland, MS
Pre-Veterinary Science; 3.49 Overall G.P.A.

North Alabama

Josh Cyr, Baseball

Senior; Huntsville, AL
Marketing; 3.33 Overall G.P.A.

West Alabama

Ryne Smith, Football

Senior; Madison, MS
History & Physical Education; 3.04 Overall G.P.A.

West Georgia

Juan Pickett, Football

Senior; Columbus, GA
Criminology; 3.13 Overall G.P.A.

Emily Ruel, Volleyball

Junior; San Bernardino, CA
Biology, Psychology Minor; 3.50 Overall G.P.A.

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