



GULF SOUTH CONFERENCE

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May 2018

GSC ANNOUNCES 2018 TOP TEN HONOREES

BIRMINGHAM, Ala. - The Gulf South Conference is proud to announce its 22nd annual GSC "Top Ten" Award winners. These awards recognize the top five female and top five male student-athletes for their athletic, academic, and extracurricular achievement during the 2017-18 academic year. Of this group, the top male and top female will receive the Commissioner's Trophy, the conference's most elite award.

The presentations will be made at the GSC's Annual Awards Banquet, Thursday, May 31, at the Hilton Pensacola Beach starting at 5:30 p.m. The entire ceremony will be streamed on Facebook Live. Following the Top Ten presentations, the conference will reveal the winners of the Commissioner's Trophies and recognize the All-Sports Trophy Champions (*Overall: **West Florida**, Men: **West Florida**, Women: **Lee***).

The "Top Ten" are selected with the assistance of an advisory committee representing the Athletic Directors, Senior Woman Administrators, Sports Information Directors, Faculty Athletics Representatives, and Presidents from randomly selected GSC schools, which makes a recommendation to the Commissioner, who has the final decision.

Four seniors headline the five female Top Ten winners: **Janey Berends** (Union, Cross Country), **Lexie Bradley** (North Alabama, Volleyball), **Katie Nelson** (Montevallo, Cross Country), and **Summer Lanter** (Lee, Soccer). Completing the list in junior **Andrea McDonald** (Mississippi College, Soccer/Track & Field).

Bradley became North Alabama's seventh women's honoree in eight years, while McDonald claimed Mississippi College's first ever Top Ten award. Berends gives Union its first women's honoree since Amy Philamlee in 2015. Nelson is Montevallo's second all-time selection, following Adrienne Peters in 2003. Lanter returned Lee to the women's list for the second straight year.

Three seniors highlight the five male Top Ten winners: **Bradley Louis** (West Alabama, Soccer), **Chandler Blanchet** (West Florida, Golf), and **Clay Casey** (Delta State, Baseball). Rounding out the list are juniors **Beau Justice** (Valdosta State, Basketball) and **Josiah Brooks** (Lee, Track & Field).

Brooks gives Lee three winners in the past four years, following his brother Justin's recognition last season. Casey garners Delta State's sixth award in the past seven years, while Justice is Valdosta State's first winner since 2013. Blanchet is West Florida's fourteenth Top Ten winner and fifth men's golfer to win. Louis brings West Alabama its first men's soccer honoree this year.

PROFILES OF TOP TEN WINNERS ON NEXT 5 PAGES



Clay Casey
Delta State University
Baseball | Senior | Outfield
Computer Information Systems | 4.0 GPA

Clay Casey made the most of his two years at Delta State, exemplifying everything it means to be an excellent student-athlete. The starting team captain was a two-time First Team All-GSC member, ranking second in the conference in RBIs and home runs and earning GSC Player of the Week and NCBWA Player of the Week honors this season. He garnered many awards throughout his career, earning NCBWA and D2CCA All-America and All Region honors in 2017, along with being named to the 2017 ABCA All-

South Region First Team.

The senior had an impressive academic career as well, with a current 4.0 grade point average and 2017 GSC Honor Roll honors. He was named to the President's list this year and was awarded the Charles S. Kerg Award for being the Top Male Student-Athlete on the Statesmen campus. He led his team in many on-campus community service projects, including a Christmas Toy Drive and a Thanksgiving Canned Food Drive. He also contributed much in off-campus community service, involving himself in the Women's Resource Center Groundskeeping Project, the Presbyterian Day School Activity Program, and the Pearman, PDS, and Bell Academy reading programs.



Katie Nelson
University of Montevallo
Women's Cross Country | Women's Track and Field | Senior
Biochemistry | 3.646 GPA

Katie Nelson's positive attitude and work ethic has brought her much success throughout her career at Montevallo. The senior capped an impressive year by coming in first at the GSC Cross Country Championship race with a time of 17:33.65. Her performance brought her First-Team All-GSC honors and helped the Falcons to a third place team finish in the championship. She went on to race at the NCAA Division II National Championship, finishing 83rd in a field of 247 of the best cross country runners

in the nation. The three-time GSC Runner of the Week received USTFCCCA All-South Region honors at the conclusion of the season. Montevallo competed in the Peach Belt Conference for three years of Nelson's career. During her time with the PBC, she was a three-time PBC Runner of the Year, three-time All-Conference and All-Region selection, and finished first in the conference race in 2014.

Along with her athletics, Nelson balanced a tough academic schedule as a biochemistry major. By maintaining a 3.646 grade point average, she was named to the Academic All-GSC Team and the GSC Academic Honor Roll this year. She also received the Dean of Arts and Sciences Scholarship, the Leadership Scholarship, and the Laura Calfee Higdon Award at Montevallo. Nelson contributed much to the community by volunteering as a counselor at the Wide Open Country Camp and for the Christmas Project in Brewton, Alabama.



Bradley Louis
University of West Alabama
Men's Soccer | Senior | Goalkeeper
Biology Comprehensive (Pre-med) | 3.77 GPA

Bradley Louis has been a natural leader on and off the field at West Alabama over the last four years. His hard work and drive led the Tigers to the four consecutive GSC Championships, and two NCAA Regional appearances. The starting team captain received GSC All-Tournament honors three times throughout his career, including earning the Most Outstanding Player award in 2016. The senior led the conference in Goals Against Average this season, tallying 14 goals against in 18 games.

Louis was an excellent student at West Alabama, accumulating a 3.77 grade point average in a tough pre-medical Biology Comprehensive major. He was a UWA Scholar-Athlete Graduate and received the ADA Academic Achievement Award on campus this year. At West Alabama, he was a Chi Alpha Sigma inductee, a member of the Blue Key Honor Society, and a member of the AED Healthcare Honor Society. To cap an impressive academic year, the senior was also an Alabama Sports Hall of Fame Scholar-Athlete Post-Graduate Finalist.

Louis contributed on campus in many ways as the UWA SAAC President, representing UWA at the SAAC Summer Conference for three years as well as being chosen as the Male Athlete Representative for the UWA Athletic Committee. His community service at West Alabama cannot be matched, volunteering at Science Saturdays on the Tigers' campus, leading as the Vice President in the Tri-Beta Biological Honor Society, and serving as the Secretary and Treasurer of the UWA Alabama Rural Health Organization. The senior shined off campus as well, volunteering for Relay for Life, Better Basics, Inc., and at multiple local soccer clinics in the Livingston and Demopolis areas.



Andrea McDonald
Mississippi College
Women's Soccer | Women's Track and Field | Senior
Pre-Physical Therapy | 3.57 GPA

Andrea McDonald has excelled as a dual sport athlete at Mississippi College, competing at the highest level on the women's soccer team and the women's track and field team. This season alone, she received First Team All-GSC honors in each sport. On the pitch, she led the Lady Choctaws to their second straight GSC Championship Match and to the No. 1 seed in the South Region, advancing to the NCAA Division II Tournament for the first time in school history. She was named Second Team All-South Region by the United Soccer Coaches and First Team All-South Region by the CCA. The junior was named the Most Outstanding Field Performer at the GSC Track and Field Championships after scoring 28 individual points and winning two gold medals and one silver medal. Her impressive season led her to be named the GSC Co-Field Athlete of the Year.

McDonald is also an impressive student, currently holding a 3.57 grade point average in a tough Pre-Physical Therapy curriculum. This year she was named to the GSC All-Academic Team for women's soccer and has been named to the GSC Honor Roll five times in her career, three times for women's soccer and two times for women's track and field. She was also named to the CoSIDA Academic All-District Team in 2016.

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Chandler Blanchet
University of West Florida
Men's Golf | Senior
Exercise Science | 3.65 GPA

Chandler Blanchet embodies what it means to be a student-athlete at this level on and off the green. The senior was the team captain this year and received several accolades, including GSC Golfer of the Month in March, GSC Golfer of the Year for the third straight year, and First Team All-GSC for the third consecutive season. Blanchet finished second at the GSC Championship, leading the Argos to their sixth straight conference title. With his second place rounds of 73-69-68, he became the first player in GSC history to post the low 54-hole score in three league championships. Under his leadership, the Argos won five tournaments and placed in the top three in the rest. He finished the regular season with an impressive stroke average of 69.63, the lowest in the conference and second lowest in West Florida History. Additionally, Blanchet is the only Division II golfer on the Ben Hogan Award Watch List.

Blanchet has had an incredible career for the Argos, including winning the NCAA Division II Men's Golf Individual Title in 2017. He also won the Jack Nicklaus Award as National Player of the Year for Division II and the Arnold Palmer Award in 2017. He has received All-GSC recognition every year since he began his college career, was a two-time GCAA First Team All-American, and a two time PING First Team All-Region by the GCAA.

Academically, the senior maintained a 3.65 grade point average and was named the UWF Male Student Athlete of the Year. He's received CoSIDA First Team Academic All-America and CoSIDA Academic All-Region recognition for the 2016-17 year. Other academic accolades include being twice named to the GSC Spring All-Academic Team and thrice named to the GSC Commissioner's Honor Roll. Off the green, Blanchet volunteers at the local soup kitchen, Loaves & Fishes, serving food to Pensacola's homeless and hungry population.



Janey Berends
Union University
Women's Cross Country | Senior
Double Major: Spanish and Applied Linguistics / Minor: Business | 4.0 GPA

During her four years at Union, Janey Berends has exemplified the character, work ethic, and determination that is necessary for a team leader and a member of the GSC Top Ten. Berends had four top-ten finishes on the season, including a 10th place finish at the GSC Championships. She earned her third First Team All-GSC selection and her fourth USTFCCA All-South Region honors this season.

The team captain has also had a stellar academic career at Union, double majoring in Spanish and Applied Linguistics. This year she was named USTFCCA All-Academic and to the GSC Academic Honor Roll. She was also a member of the Alpha Chi National Honor Society, made the President's List seven times at Union, and was the first ever Union student to receive the Fulbright Grant. Berends also participated in many extra-curricular activities on campus, including serving as a student leader for MOSAIC, serving as a small-group leader and recreation supervisor for Mission Jackson Volunteer, playing in the Union University Symphonic Band and Orchestra, and participating in the first Union-Lane collaborative Race & Reconciliation course.



Beau Justice
Valdosta State University
Men's Basketball | Guard | Junior
Interdisciplinary Studies | 3.3 GPA

Beau Justice's strong work ethic has served him well throughout his career at Valdosta State. The junior led the Blazers to a 26-5 overall record and an impressive 18-2 GSC record, finishing the season as the top seed heading into the conference tournament. Justice ranked third in the league in scoring, averaging 20 points per game, and ranked second in 3-point field goal percentage. He became just the second player in VSU history to tally 1,000 points in two seasons or less. The starting team captain received

many accolades on the year, including GSC Player of the Year, D2CCA South Region Player of the Year, NABC Division II All-America, First Team D2CCA All-Region, First Team All-GSC, and Preseason All-GSC. In addition to his athletics, Justice excelled in the classroom and was named to the Academic All-GSC Team and to the GSC Academic Honor Roll this year for the second straight year.



Lexie Bradley
University of North Alabama
Volleyball | Outside Hitter | Senior
Elementary Education | 3.93 GPA

Lexie Bradley has had an incredible career at North Alabama, becoming only the 11th person in school history to earn both All-America and Academic All-America honors. In her four years, she has helped the Lions to two GSC Championships, and three NCAA Tournament appearances. She earned four GSC Player of the Week awards and was named First Team All-GSC and GSC Player of the Year at the conclusion of this season, leading the conference in kills and points. Bradley received recognition nationally as well, being selected First Team AVCA All-America, Second Team D2CCA All America, and First Team All-South Region by the AVCA and D2CCA. In 2016, she received Honorable Mention AVCA All-America, AVCA All-South Region, First Team All-GSC, and Second Team D2CCA All-South Region honors.

The senior stood out in the classroom also, earning GSC Academic Honor Roll status and being named First Team CoSIDA Academic All-District and Second Team CoSIDA Academic All-America. Bradley also received the UNA Dean Scholar Athlete Award for three straight years. She volunteered for many community service projects on campus, including the UNA Campus Clean-up, "Night to Shine", reading programs at Kilby School and Harlan Elementary School, and the UNA Sportsman's Club Dinner and Auction.

The senior stood out in the classroom also, earning GSC Academic Honor Roll status and being named First Team CoSIDA Academic All-District and Second Team CoSIDA Academic All-America. Bradley also received the UNA Dean Scholar Athlete Award for three straight years. She volunteered for many community service projects on campus, including the UNA Campus Clean-up, "Night to Shine", reading programs at Kilby School and Harlan Elementary School, and the UNA Sportsman's Club Dinner and Auction.



Josiah Brooks
Lee University
Men's Track and Field | Junior
Information Systems and Christian Ministry | 3.109 GPA

Josiah Brooks has been an exemplary athlete, student, and leader over his last three years at Lee. Brooks led the Flames to finish third at the GSC Championship, finishing first in the 100 meter, third in the 200 meter, and second in the triple jump. With his impressive performance, he was selected the Most Outstanding Overall Performer of the championship and received First and Second Team All-GSC honors. The junior also won both the GSC Field Performer of the Week award and USTFCCCA National Athlete of the Week award on March 21. At the NCAA Outdoor Track and Field Championships, Brooks was named First Team All-American in the 200m and Second Team All-American in the triple jump. He was also the team captain and the team SAAC representative this year.

Brooks is also very driven in the classroom, earning the Henry & Iris Atkins Scholarship and winning the Lee University Male Student-Athlete of the Year awards. His leadership skills have led him to be voted the SAAC President for the upcoming year as well as the Lee University Dorm Chaplain. He volunteers in several community service programs off-campus, including the Community Encore Program and Habitat for Humanity. In his last three years at Lee, he has completed 60 hours of community service in addition to his athletics. He was named to the GSC Honor Roll in 2016 and 2017, continuing on to be named USTFCCCA Academic All-America and Academic All-Region in 2017.



Summer Lanter
Lee University
Women's Soccer | Forward | Senior
Nursing | 3.905 GPA

Summer Lanter is an outstanding student-athlete who has played an integral part in the success of the Lee women's soccer team. Under her leadership as team captain this season, the Lady Flames won the 2017 GSC Championship and went all the way to the NCAA South Region final. She was named the Most Outstanding Player of the conference tournament and received her second GSC Player of the Year award this year. Due to her success on the field, Lanter garnered many national awards, including D2CCA and United Soccer Coaches First Team All-South Region, United Soccer Coaches Second Team All-America, and CCA South Region Player of the Year. She was named First Team All-GSC in 2015 and 2016, as well as D2CCA and United Soccer Coaches First Team All-Region in 2016.

The senior will graduate this year Summa Cum Laude with a nursing degree and was the 2018 commissioning speaker. She received the highest award a student-athlete can win at Lee this year, the Paul Conn Student-Athlete of the Year award and was also named the Lee University Female Student-Athlete of the Year. For the third straight year, Lanter was named to the GSC All-Academic Team and GSC Honor Roll. She is a member of the Chi Alpha Sigma Honor Society and volunteers locally with Haven Place, the Austin Hatcher Foundation, and Kicking It With Kid's with Cancer to complete more than 80 hours of community service.