



Jared Pine
Sports Communications Director
Phone: 909-538-6025
E-Mail: jaredpine@thepacwest.com

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Defending Champion Azusa Pacific Named Preseason Favorite

IRVINE, Calif. – Defending champion Azusa Pacific was picked by the PacWest coaches as the preseason favorite for the upcoming season with ten of the twelve first-place votes in the poll. Azusa Pacific also garnered all three special awards.

The same top-4 teams at the end of 2018 season are in the top four of the preseason poll with Fresno Pacific ranked second ahead of Point Loma followed by Concordia at No. 4. Last year, Concordia finished one point ahead of the Sea Lions. The Sunbirds and Eagles each received one first-place vote.

Two-time All-PacWest honoree **Arturo Astorga** is the Preseason PacWest Player of the Year after he helped Azusa Pacific win its second PacWest title last season. He became the third player in conference history to record double-digit goals and assists in the same season, making 11 of his 44 shots to go along with 10 assists.

Isaac Bawa was the 2018 PacWest Defender of the Year and is now the Preseason Defender of the Year. **Brendan Fix** is the Preseason Goalkeeper of the Year after recording 29 saves. Last year, the two leaders of the Cougars' defense helped the team produce six shutouts with a goals-against average of 1.18 under the leadership of reigning PacWest Coach of the Year **David Bloomquist**.

Azusa Pacific, which reached the NCAA West Regional final in 2018, also returns PacWest Newcomer of the Year **James Ndubueze** along with **Gregoire Diep** and **Bruno Pagani** who were all named to the Preseason All-PacWest team.

Fresno Pacific was picked to finish in second place again as the Sunbirds look to add to their PacWest titles from 2013 and 2015. The Sunbirds have four starters back on the roster for 2019, including **Fellipe Souza** who missed the last season with injury. In 2017, Souza was named the PacWest Newcomer of the Year. He is joined on the Preseason All-PacWest team by **Anthony Torres**, who was a third-team All-PacWest midfielder last year. The Sunbirds went 14-3-1 and reached the NCAA West Regional last year.

2019 PacWest Men's Soccer Poll

1.	Azusa Pacific (10)	138
2.	Fresno Pacific (1)	127
3.	Point Loma	119
4.	Concordia (1)	111
5.	Notre Dame de Namur	90
6.	Biola	88
7.	Hawai'i Pacific	63
8.	Chaminade	52
9.	Dominican	43
10.	Academy of Art	41
11.	Hawai'i Hilo	34
12.	Holy Names	30
<i>First-place votes in parenthesis</i>		

Point Loma recorded 10 wins last year and returns five players from the starting lineup for the 2019 season. The Sea Lions are picked to finish third in the conference. **Tim Siegried** returns to the Sea Lions after scoring the most goals of any returning PacWest athlete as he earned second-team all-region honors last year. He is joined on the Preseason All-PacWest team by **Jacob Eisenberg**, who scored two goals while helping the PLNU defense to a 1.40 goals-against average last season.

Notre Dame de Namur is picked fifth in the preseason poll with seven returning starters from last year's team which finished in seventh place in the conference. The Argonauts won PacWest titles in 2006 and 2008 and head coach **BJ Noble** has put together a strong team to go for a third conference crown. **Moises Claudio** and **Josh Santillian** were both named to the Preseason All-PacWest team after earning all-conference honors last year.

Biola is ranked sixth in the preseason coaches poll with most of its starting lineup back from last season when the Eagles finished fifth in the conference. **Jake Munivez** and **Leo Thompson** represent the Eagles on the Preseason All-PacWest team. Thompson scored 11 goals for Biola last year while Munivez started all 18 games on Biola's defensive line, which had the second-best goals-against average in the league.

After finishing in eighth place last year, Hawai'i Pacific is picked seventh in the poll followed by Chaminade, which has nine returning starters. Dominican was voted ninth in the preseason poll followed by Academy of Art, Hawai'i Hilo and Holy Names to round out the poll. Academy of Art will be under the direction of **Matt Martin**, who was named the head coach of the team during the offseason.

Five PacWest teams will begin their season on Thursday, September 5, including a non-conference clash between Biola and Point Loma, who finished within one point of each other in the PacWest standings last year. It will be a busy day for PacWest men's soccer in the San Diego County with Concordia visiting UC San Diego and Fresno Pacific traveling to Cal State San Marcos. Preseason favorite Azusa Pacific will begin its quest to return to the NCAA West Regional at Cal State Dominguez Hills. On September 12, Azusa Pacific will host Cal Poly Pomona in a rematch of the 2018 NCAA West Regional championship match.

Conference play will be in full swing in October when Notre Dame de Namur makes its trip to Hawaii. Concordia will face Fresno Pacific on October 5 and Point Loma will host Azusa Pacific on October 12. The rematch between Azusa Pacific and Fresno Pacific is on November 9 with the Sunbirds hosting. The final day of the regular season is November 16, which features contests between Notre Dame de Namur against Concordia and Fresno Pacific hosting Biola.

The postseason selection show will be held on November 18, where the PacWest champion will get an automatic bid while the rest of the conference will need an at-large bid. The first round of the postseason will start on November 22 with the top-2 seeds hosting sub-regional tournaments.

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2019 PRESEASON ALL-PACWEST MEN'S SOCCER AWARDS

Player of the Year	Defender of the Year	Goalkeeper of the Year
Arturo Astorga Azusa Pacific	Isaac Bawa Azusa Pacific	Brendan Fix Azusa Pacific

2019 PRESEASON ALL-PACWEST MEN'S SOCCER TEAM

Name	School	Pos.	Yr.	Hometown/Previous School
Arturo Astorga	Azusa Pacific	F	Sr.	El Paso, Tex./Canutillo
James Ndubueze	Azusa Pacific	F	Jr.	Paderborn, Germany/SC Paderborn 09
Tim Siegfried	Point Loma	F	Jr.	Osterburken, Germany/Apian-Gymnasium
Fellipe Souza	Fresno Pacific	F	Sr.	Juiz de Fora, Brazil/West Hills
Leo Thompson	Biola	F	Sr.	Birmingham, English/Thomas University
Gregoire Diep	Azusa Pacific	M	So.	Munich, Germany/FOS Ingolstadt
Bruno Pagani	Azusa Pacific	M	Sr.	Madrid, Spain/Dharma
Josh Santillian	Notre Dame de Namur	M	So.	Union City, Calif./Newark Memorial
Tony Torres	Fresno Pacific	M	Jr.	Fresno, Calif./West Hills
Isaac Bawa	Azusa Pacific	D	So.	Accra, Ghana/Wa Senior
Moises Claudio	Notre Dame de Namur	D	Sr.	Hawthorne, Calif./Lawndale
Jake Eisenberg	Point Loma	D	Jr.	Temecula, Calif./Chaparral
Jake Munivez	Biola	D	Sr.	Anaheim, Calif./Esperanza
Brendan Fix	Azusa Pacific	GK	Jr.	Huntington Beach, Calif./Edison