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Azusa Pacific Named Favorite To Defend Title

IRVINE, Calif. – After winning its first conference title last year, Azusa Pacific was picked by the PacWest coaches as the favorite to win the title again in 2019, and the Cougars' middle blocker **Julianne Miller** is the PacWest Preseason Player of the Year.

The Preseason PacWest Setter of the Year is **Cara Keturakis** from Point Loma, while Biola's **Sami Hover** was voted as the Preseason Libero of the Year. Chaminade was picked second in the preseason poll followed by Biola and Point Loma in the top-4 teams.

Last year, Azusa Pacific went 20-2 in conference play with eight-consecutive wins to wrap up the regular season with the PacWest title. The Cougars bring back five starters and their libero from that team as they look to defend the title. Azusa Pacific, which received ten first-place votes, returns Preseason All-PacWest honorees **Sara Wagenveld** and Miller. The duo of middle blockers averaged a combined 4.93 kills per set with two of the best attack percentages in the league.

The Cougars also return third-team All-PacWest honoree **Aliyah Morrison** along with defensive specialist **Bailey Hennington** who missed the 2018 season. PacWest Coach of the Year **Chris Keife** added to the Cougars' roster setter **Mina Andjelkovic** who is a transfer from Long Beach State.

Chaminade received one first-place vote and is picked to finish second in the conference. After reaching the NCAA West Regional last year, the Silverswords have two Preseason All-PacWest selections back for the 2019 season. Outside hitters **Alana Handy** and **Emma Tecklenburg** were both named to the All-PacWest team last year as well after combining for 6.82 kills and 5.71 digs per set. Chaminade also added two NCAA Division I transfers to strengthen its defense with **Leka Kiner-Falefa** and **Tatiana Toleafoa** as the team goes for its first PacWest title since 1996.

Biola finished in second place in the PacWest last year and is picked to finish third in the PacWest in its first year of NCAA playoff eligibility. The Eagles went 30-6 last year and defended the NCCAA national title with four returning starters from that team. Hover averaged 4.76 digs and earned second-team All-PacWest recognition in 2018. Biola also returns **Bekah Roth** who had 180 kills and 126 blocks.

2019 PacWest Volleyball Poll

1.	Azusa Pacific (10)	142
2.	Chaminade (1)	124
3.	Biola (1)	115
4.	Point Loma	107
5.	Hawai'i Hilo	94
6.	Concordia	87
7.	Hawai'i Pacific	83
8.	Dominican	51
9.	Notre Dame de Namur	43
10.	Fresno Pacific	33
11.	Academy of Art	30
12.	Holy Names	27

First-place votes in parenthesis

Point Loma is fourth in the preseason poll after winning 18 matches last year. Keturakis is the reigning PacWest Setter of the Year and also earned the preseason version of the award for 2019. She led the conference in assists last year with 1,061 to boost her career total to 3,132, which ranks seventh in PacWest history. Keturakis needs 1,280 more assists to tie the PacWest career record. The Sea Lions have a total of five returning starters and added **Tressa Buckland**, a transfer from Alabama-Birmingham, where she played beach volleyball.

Hawai'i Hilo finished the 2018 season in a tie for third place in the PacWest and is picked fifth in the preseason poll. **Bria Beale** was named to the Preseason All-PacWest team after earning first-team honors last year. Beale recorded 297 kills and 306 digs last season. The Vulcans have a total of five returning starters for first-year head coach **Chris Leonard**.

Concordia is picked sixth in the PacWest as the Eagles look to return to what led them to a PacWest title in 2016. The Eagles have six returning starters for the 2019 season after finishing seventh in the conference last year. **Clarice Buchanan** and **Patience O'Neal** are both back after earning All-PacWest honorable mention.

Hawai'i Pacific is picked seventh in the poll after finishing in sixth place last year and is represented by **Perla Escobar** on the Preseason All-PacWest team. Dominican is picked eighth in the PacWest followed by Notre Dame de Namur, which is under the leadership of first-year head coach **Margaret Billingsley**. Fresno Pacific also has a new head coach, **Shasta Millhollin**, and is picked 10th in the PacWest with Academy of Art and Holy Names rounding out the preseason poll.

The 2019 season begins on September 6 with 18 matches featuring PacWest teams taking place that Friday. Point Loma is hosting a tournament on the opening weekend featuring Concordia, Cal State East Bay, Southern Nazarene, San Francisco State and Seattle Pacific. Biola will travel to Anchorage, Alaska to get its season started.

The CCAA will host the annual D2 West Region Volleyball Showcase with seven teams hosting pods around California. Azusa Pacific and Hawai'i Pacific will be at Cal State LA, while Hawai'i Hilo and Chaminade travel to Cal Poly Pomona. On September 13, Biola will face Alaska Anchorage and defending CCAA defending champion Cal State San Bernardino. Chaminade will be the first PacWest team to take on defending West Region champion Western Washington at 2:30 p.m. in Pomona.

The PacWest season starts on Wednesday, September 18 with Dominican hosting Notre Dame de Namur, while Point Loma visits Concordia. Azusa Pacific opens its title defense on September 21 against visiting Point Loma. The Cougars will face Chaminade for the first time of the season on October 25 as the first of three matches in four days on the islands. The final day of the regular season is November 23 when Hawai'i Hilo hosts Academy of Art. The NCAA Selection Show is on November 25 when the PacWest teams will find out if they advance to the NCAA West Regional, which will be hosted by the No. 1 seed in the region.



2019 PRESEASON ALL-PACWEST VOLLEYBALL AWARDS

Player of the Year	Setter of the Year	Libero of the Year
Julianne Miller Azusa Pacific	Cara Keturakis Point Loma	Sami Hover Biola

2019 PRESEASON ALL-PACWEST VOLLEYBALL TEAM

Name	School	Pos.	Yr.	Hometown/Previous School
Bria Beale	Hawai'i Hilo	OH	Jr.	Rancho Cucamonga, Calif./UC Irvine
Perla Escobar	Hawai'i Pacific	OH	Sr.	Calexico, Calif./Calexico
Alana Handy	Chaminade	OH	Sr.	Burlington, Wash./Burlington-Edison
Cara Keturakis	Point Loma	S	Sr.	Surrey, Canada/Earl Marriott Secondary
Julianne Miller	Azusa Pacific	MB	Sr.	Rocklin, Calif./Rocklin
Emma Tecklenburg	Chaminade	OH	Sr.	Plano, Texas/Plano Senior
Sara Wagenveld	Azusa Pacific	MB	Sr.	Escondido, Calif./Calvin Christian