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For Immediate Release

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SMU PICKED CONFERENCE USA WOMEN'S SOCCER PRESEASON FAVORITE
Mustangs' O'Rear and UAB's Cooney Receive Individual Recognition

IRVING, Texas – SMU, coming off its fourth consecutive NCAA appearance, has been selected to win the 2005 Conference USA Women's Soccer Championship by the league's coaches. Junior forward **Olivia O'Rear** of SMU was named the Preseason C-USA Offensive Player of the Year, and UAB junior defender **Pam Cooney** was chosen as the C-USA Defensive Player of the Year.

The Mustangs compiled a 15-4-3 overall record last season under head coach **John Cossaboon**. SMU returns 2004 NSCAA All-Region second team selection O'Rear, who has led the Mustang scoring attack the last two seasons. Also returning from a stellar freshman season is sophomore defender/midfielder **Kimber Bailey**. The duo combined for 33 goals last season.

UCF was picked second in the coaches' vote, followed by UAB in third. Both teams also earned a berth to the NCAA Tournament in 2004. UCF earned an automatic berth for winning the Atlantic Sun Tournament and the Golden Knights are currently ranked No. 28 in the SoccerBuzz.com preseason poll.

The Blazers earned their first NCAA bid, advancing to the second round of the tournament with a 2-0 victory against Wake Forest. A key to that success was Cooney, who earned C-USA All-Tournament Team honors as well as a selection on the All-C-USA third team last season. She also anchored a defense that recorded eight shutouts – the second-most for a single season in school history.

Rice has been tabbed to finish fourth in the league this season. The Owls will be seeking their second consecutive NCAA Tournament bid under head coach **Chris Huston**.

Memphis has been picked to finish fifth, in front of UTEP. East Carolina earned the No. 7 spot in the preseason rankings, and should be led by two-time All-Conference USA first team selection **Meghan McCallion**. Tulsa has been picked to finish eighth. Tulane, Houston, Marshall and Southern Miss fill in the last four slots, respectively.

The top eight finishers in the regular season earn a spot in the 2005 Conference USA Tournament, hosted by Rice University November 2-5. The league's 11th season kicks off Friday, August 26.

2005 C-USA PRESEASON AWARDS

C-USA PRESEASON OFFENSIVE PLAYER OF THE YEAR

Olivia O'Rear, Jr., F, SMU

C-USA PRESEASON DEFENSIVE PLAYER OF THE YEAR

Pam Cooney, Jr., D, UAB

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CONFERENCE USA PLAYERS TO WATCH

Meghan McCallion, Sr., F, East Carolina
Rachel Hils, Jr., D/MF, East Carolina
Sarah Fisher, Jr., D/MF, Houston
Sophia Mundy, Jr., MF/F, Houston
Jamie Gruber, Sr., MF, Marshall
Kassie Hollman, So., F, Marshall
Nicky McLeod, Sr., MF, Memphis
Melissa Savage, Jr., MF, Memphis
Erin Droeger, Sr., D, Rice
Clory Martin, So., F, Rice
Olivia O'Rear, Jr., F, SMU
Kimber Bailey, So., D/MF, SMU
Micah Stephens, Sr. D/MF, Southern Miss
Kim Turner, Jr., MF, Southern Miss
Jackie Obert, Jr., MF, Tulane
Carrie Schnarre, Sr., F, Tulsa
Katie Ward, Jr., F, Tulsa
Jennifer Williams, Jr., MF, UAB
Pam Cooney, Jr., D, UAB
Courtney Baines, Sr., D/F, UCF
Jennifer Montgomery, Sr., F, UCF
Kaletia Roberts, Sr., MF, UTEP
Kia Sams, Sr., MF, UTEP

2005 C-USA PRESEASON POLL

(as selected by C-USA coaches)

1. SMU
2. UCF
3. UAB
4. Rice
5. Memphis
6. UTEP
7. East Carolina
8. Tulsa
9. Tulane
10. Houston
11. Marshall
12. Southern Miss