

2008-09 WCC Preseason Poll

Gonzaga Tabbed As Preseason Favorite In WCC Women's Basketball Coaches Poll

Gonzaga was chosen as the favorite to claim the WCC women's basketball title, as they try to defend their WCC regular season title, in the 2008-09 preseason poll. The Bulldogs, who received seven first place votes for a total of 49 points, lost in the finals of last year's WCC tournament to host San Diego and ended up hosting their first round matchup in the WNIT, where they beat UC Davis, before losing in the second round at Colorado. Loyola Marymount received one first place vote and totaled 40 points to come in at second in the voting.

Headlining the group of Gonzaga returners are 2007-08 WCC Player of the Year Heather Bowman, Defensive Player of the Year Jami Schaefer, and Newcomer of the Year Courtney Vandersloot. Bowman led the league in scoring at 20.1 ppg in just her second year in the league and was third in the league in rebounding at 8.6 rpg, on her way to a WCC all-first team selection. Schaefer, previously known as Bjorklund, was third on the team in scoring en route to a WCC honorable mention selection. Vandersloot will enter the year as the conference's steals leader and led the team in assists.

Loyola Marymount will be led by sophomore guard Renahy Young, who led the team in scoring at 10.9 ppg and was second in assists with 2.0 apg. In just her first start of her career, Young scored 20 points and hit the game-winning shot against Portland. Also looking to contribute is junior Lisa Helmers, who led the team in three-point shooting with 59 treys and was third in the conference.

San Diego, who actually won the WCC tournament last year, was picked third in this year's poll, receiving 37 points. The Toreros welcome back one of the most experienced squad with four starters returning. Among the key returners are senior Amber Sprague, who led the team in scoring (15.2 ppg), rebounding (8.7 rpg), and blocks (75), on her way to an all-WCC first team selection, junior Morgan Henderson, who led the team in threes with 44, and sophomore Sam Child, who made the All-Freshmen team. Saint Mary's was selected for a fourth place finish with 29 points. The Gael's, who registered a first round win in last year's conference tournament, return the nation's leading shot blocker in sophomore Louella Tomlinson and a healthy Majia Lahde, who returns after missing the year with a knee injury.

Santa Clara, who finished second in last year's regular season, tallied 20 points for a fifth place finish in the poll. The Broncos will be expecting contributions from Elizabeth Doran, who enters as the team's leading scorer, and Sara Majors, who enters as the team's assists leader. Pepperdine who finished sixth in the voting with 19 points, returns Miranda Ayim who led the WCC in field goal percentage en route to an all-WCC first team selection.

Portland, seventh in the voting with 16 points, returns Laiken Dollente, who led the Pilots in scoring and was second in the nation in free throw percentage. San Francisco rounds out the voting with 14 points and welcomes back Shay Rollins, who enters as the leading scorer, and Necolia Simmons, who enters as the leading rebounder.

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1. Gonzaga	49 (7)
2. Loyola Marymount	40 (1)
3. San Diego	37
4. Saint Mary's	29
5. Santa Clara	20
6. Pepperdine	19
7. Portland	16
8. San Francisco	14

(First place votes)

