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San Diego Tabbed Favorite In 2009 WCC Women's Volleyball Preseason Poll

SAN BRUNO, CA - Fresh off its fourth conference championship in the last five years, the University of San Diego has once again been selected as the preseason favorite to take home the 2009 West Coast Conference regular season title. The Toreros, who will be returning five starters from last year's squad, received the maximum seven first place votes for a total of 49 points. Head Coach Jennifer Petrie returns the reigning WCC Player of the Year in Amy DeGroot as well as Ali Troost, both of whom were named to the preseason all-conference team, also selected by the league's head coaches.

The rest of the top half of the poll was very close as Pepperdine just edged out Saint Mary's, which barely beat out Santa Clara. The Waves received 38 points for second place and will return four starters, highlighted by Kim Hill, who was the 2008 WCC Freshman of the Year, and Kiah Fiers, both members of this year's preseason all-conference team.

Saint Mary's, which received the remaining first place vote, tallied 37 points, and return Megan Burton, Kapua Kamana'o, and Shannon Lowell to highlight the five returning starters. The three give the Gaels the most players on the preseason all-conference team.

Rounding out the top half of the poll is Santa Clara with 35 points. The Broncos return three starters from last year's squad who made it to the second of the NCAA Tournament, highlighted by Lindsay Davigeadono, who was named to this year's preseason all-conference team.

San Francisco received 24 points for a fifth place finish and round out the teams that made the NCAA Tournament last season. The Dons return two players who made the preseason all-conference team in Haley Carroll and Sarah Mandala.

Loyola Marymount finished close behind San Francisco, with 21 points for a sixth place finish. The five starters returning for the Lions are led by Ariana Covington, who will return as the team leader in kills (310) and Becky Stehling, who led the team in total blocks (78.0).

Closing out the preseason poll is Gonzaga and Portland, which tied for seventh place with 10 points each. The Zags will be led by first year Head Coach Dave Gantt, who returns five starters, including Denise Van de Mortel, who led the league in assists (1,206) and Layne Brosky. The Pilots return four starters and will be led by Jessica Clemens, who returns as the team leader in kills (271).

The WCC experienced tremendous success last season as it sent five teams to the NCAA Tournament, which was the highest percentage of teams to make it from any conference. The league also finished fourth in the NCAA RPI rankings, to tie for its highest ever finish.

Women's Volleyball 2009 Preseason Poll			Women's Volleyball 2009 Preseason All-Conference Team			
1.	San Diego	49 (7)	Name	School	YR	POS
2.	Pepperdine	38	Megan Burton	SMC	SR	MB
3.	Saint Mary's	37 (1)	Haley Carroll	USF	SR	LIB
4.	Santa Clara	35	Lindsay Davigeadono	SCU	SR	OH
5.	San Francisco	24	Amy DeGroot	USD	SR	OH
6.	Loyola Marymount	21	Kiah Fiers	PEP	SR	S
7.	Gonzaga	10	Kim Hill	PEP	SO	MB
	Portland	10	Kapua Kaman'o	SMC	JR	S
			Shannon Lowell	SMC	JR	MB
			Sarah Mandala	USF	JR	OPP
			Ali Troost	USD	JR	RS

(First place votes)