



MPSF NEWS

MOUNTAIN PACIFIC SPORTS FEDERATION
 PO Box 850 • Woodland, CA 95776-0850
 530.669.7600 • Fax 530.669.7627 • abeaird@mppsports.org

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: Monday, August 21, 2006

Contact: Al Beaird

USC EDGES CAL FOR TOP SPOT IN 2006 MPSF PRESEASON WATER POLO COACHES' POLL

USC lands atop the second annual MPSF Preseason Men's Water Polo Coaches' Poll after barely edging California by one point in the voting, with both teams earning four first-place votes. The Trojans return as the reigning MPSF and NCAA Champions from the 2005 season. CALIFORNIA, who comes out of the shoot ranked No. 2 for the second-consecutive year, finished last season fifth in the MPSF, although, MPSF head coaches again anticipate a strong season for the Golden Bears in 2006. UCLA is ranked No. 3 over STANFORD who earns the No. 4 spot. Pepperdine is ranked No. 5 after finishing sixth in '05, followed by No. 6 PACIFIC and last year's MPSF runner-up UC IRVINE in the No. 7 slot. No. 8 UC SANTA BARBARA moves up one notch above the Gauchos' ninth-place finish from 2006, with LONG BEACH STATE coming in with the No. 9 ranking after an eighth-place finish last season.

Rank	Team	Points	2005 team record:	2005 MPSF finish:
No. 1	USC	58 points (4 first-place vote)	8-0 MPSF, 24-1 overall	#1 MPSF/NCAA Champ
No. 2	California	57 points (4 first-place votes)	5-3 MPSF, 21-7 overall	#5
No. 3	UCLA	54 points (1 first-place votes)	5-3 MPSF, 21-8 overall	#4
No. 4	Stanford	45 points	6-2 MPSF, 19-6 overall	#3
No. 5	Pepperdine	30 points (1 first-place vote)	3-5 MPSF, 18-11 overall	#6
No. 6	Pacific	29 points	2-6 MPSF, 19-14 overall	#7
No. 7	UC Irvine	23 points	6-2 MPSF, 18-12 overall	#2
No. 8	UC Santa Barbara	16 points	0-8 MPSF, 13-17 overall	#9
No. 9	Long Beach State	12 points	1-7 MPSF, 17-18 overall	#8

2006 MPSF PREVIEW

No. 1: USC (8-0 MPSF, 24-1 overall 2005) – USC head coach **Jovan Vavic**, the 2005 National and MPSF Coach of the Year, has hauled in an eye-popping crop of fresh talent for the coming year in an effort to bolster the Trojan roster as USC goes in pursuit of back-to-back NCAA and MPSF titles. Five incoming athletes traveled overseas during the summer as members of the U.S. Junior National Team, including Senior National Team player **J.W. Krumpholz**. The Trojans are led this year by three highly respected standout seniors, **Juan Delgadillo**, **Thomas Hale** and **Pavol Valovic**. Balance and depth will be prominent for the 2006 USC squad, and the cage will be manned once again by junior NCAA Co-MVP **Adam Shilling**. The Trojans enter 2006 on a 19-game winning streak following a program-best 26-1 finish in 2005 that culminated in USC's third NCAA championship. Vavic is in his 12th year as head coach at USC.

No. 2: CALIFORNIA (5-3 MPSF, 21-7 overall 2005) – All indicators point to a successful 2006 season for the University of California men's water polo team positions itself to make a run for the program's 12th NCAA title, featuring returning All-America standouts **John Mann**, **Michael Sharf**, **Marty Matthies** and **Andrija Vasiljevic**. The Golden Bears also showcase seniors **Brian Kinsel** and **Brian Bacharach**, who have 96 and 95 career goals, respectively. A top newcomer for the Bears is redshirt freshman **Spencer Warden**, a member of the USA Junior National Team who was first-team All-SCCAL and second-team All-Central Coast Section as a senior at Soquel High School. Another top newcomer will be sophomore attacker **Frank Reynolds**, who played at USC in 2004. A 2004 inductee into the Cal Athletic Hall of Fame, head coach **Kirk Everist** is entering his fifth year as the Bears mentor, owning an 81-32 mark (.717) after leading the Bears to a 21-7 mark and a No. 3 national ranking last season.

No. 3: UCLA (5-3 MPSF, 21-8 overall 2005) – UCLA finished the 2005 season ranked fifth nationally and compiled a 21-8 record (5-3 MPSF). Led by head coach **Adam Krikorian** (enters his eighth season), the Bruins hope to capture their ninth NCAA championship this season. The squad enters the 2006 campaign with a strong combination of leadership and experience -- 15 players from the 2004 NCAA title squad and 16 players from last season. The Bruins lost just two players to graduation in 2005 and will return to the pool this fall with eight seniors and six juniors. Staying healthy will be key, as seniors **Michael March** and **Christian Pulido** and sophomore **Patrick Morrison** return from off-season surgery. The Bruins welcome back four of their top five goal scorers from last season -- seniors **Logan Powell** and **Grant Zider**, junior **Justin Johnson** and sophomore **Krsto Sbutega**. UCLA kicks off its regular-season slate against Cal Baptist on Sept. 14 and will appear in the NorCal Tournament (Sept. 16-17) and SoCal Tournament (Oct. 14-15) during the first month of the season.

No. 4: STANFORD (6-2 MPSF, 19-6 overall 2005) – Cardinal Head Coach **John Vargas**, beginning his fifth season on the Farm, will coach a young team with only two seniors and a handful are juniors. Despite the loss of its top two scorers, **Peter Varellas** (62 goals) and **Thomas Hopkins** (48 goals) the Cardinal will have plenty of firepower in **William Hindle-Katel**, **Michael Bury**, **J.J. Garton**, **Tyler Drake** and **Ryan Fortune**, who combined to score 103 of Stanford's 245 goals last season. On defense junior goalkeeper **Sandy Hohener**, a second-team All-American, collected 171 saves in last year's drive to the NCAA final game. Vargas has recruited another excellent freshman class for the 2006 season. The list includes the **Wigo twins**, **Drac** and **Janson**, **Will Smith**, **Cody Wiesen** and **Sage Wright**. The **Wigo brothers** (from Northeast High School in Oakland Park, Fl) have the ability to make an immediate impact on the Cardinal in 2006. As always, Stanford will play a highly competitive schedule in 2006. The home schedule includes MPSF conference games against defending NCAA champion USC (11/4) and nationally-ranked California (11/19). Stanford will also host the NorCal Tournament (Sept. 16-17) featuring nearly all of the top nationally-

ranked teams in the country.

No. 5: PEPPERDINE (3-5 MPSF, 18-11 overall 2005) – The Pepperdine water polo team will be under the direction of interim head coach **Jack Kocur** this fall. Kocur is stepping in for **Terry Schroeder** who is taking a year off to serve as an assistant coach with the US National team. The Waves should be an experienced team in 2006, returning five starters and 16 letterwinners. Juniors **Adam Hewko** and **Grant Miller** are the top returning scorers off last year's team after combining for 86 goals. **Matt Digges** and his 29 goals along with **Matt MacDonell's** 14 and **Doug Mann's** 10 should provide Pepperdine with a solid front line. Pepperdine will have to rely on an inexperienced goalkeeper in 2006 following the graduation of **Ben Tait** as well as find a way to replace **Jesse Smith's** team-leading 51 goals from a year ago.

No. 6: PACIFIC (2-6 MPSF, 19-14 overall 2005) – Pacific head coach **Mike Maroney** returns for his fourth season, coming off of a year which saw the Tigers post their most wins since 1993, finishing with a record of 19-14. Pacific loses just three players from a year ago, and returns the top two goal scorers from a season ago in **Matt Turnbull** and second-team All-American **Dragan Bakic**. Turnbull notched 50 goals, 47 assists, 42 steals and 41 kick outs drawn in his second season as a Tiger, while Bakic scored 60 goals and finished sixth in the MPSF in goals per game. Team captain **Clint McLaughlin** returns for his final season, his third as captain, coming off of a 32 goal campaign in 2005. A key addition for 2006 will be junior **Duje Kaurlogo**, from Croatia who excelled at both Los Altos High and West Valley College. Kaurlogo was the JC MVP of Northern California and earned All-American honors in 2005.

No. 7: UC IRVINE (6-2 MPSF, 18-12 overall 2005) – UC Irvine second-year head coach **Marc Hunt**, who led the Anteaters to an 18-12 overall record and 6-2 MPSF mark in his initial season, welcomes the return in 2006 of junior driver **Colin Mello**, who sat out last year with a knee injury after scoring 26 goals in 2004. His offense will be needed this season as the team's top two returning scorers, second-team All-American **Tim Hutten** (64 goals in 2005) and **Cole Bitter** (24 goals), are redshirting this year. Other Anteaters to watch this season include junior **Andrew Dunn**, who scored 19 goals a year ago, senior **Curt Merlo** (9 goals) and sophomores **Taylor Wells** (3 goals) and **Jesse Hatch**, who notched a pair of goals in '05. Hunt is high on true freshman driver **Kyle Baxter**, who earned first-team All-American honors at Clovis West High School. Junior goalkeeper **Matt Garcia** returns after recording 99 saves in 14 starts last season.

No. 8: UC SANTA BARBARA (0-8 MPSF, 13-17 overall 2005) – Head Coach **Wolf Wigo** enters his second year at UC Santa Barbara's after a 0-8 MPSF and 13-17 overall record in his inaugural season of 2005. In the upcoming 2006 season, keep an eye on Gaucho **Coulson Lantz** who led the team last year in scoring with 32 goals, **Ross Sinclair** and goalie **Rick Wright**, who had 131 saves in the net for UCSB. Wigo's first incoming recruiting class is expected to help the Gauchos' on their road to a more competitive MPSF season in 2006..

No. 9: LONG BEACH STATE (1-7 MPSF, 17-18 overall 2005) – Under the direction of first-year head coach **Gavin Arroyo**, the outlook for Long Beach State is extremely bright. Arroyo welcomes back nine letterwinners off last year's squad, including All-American **Jay Gerardi**. Gerardi, a senior attacker, finished second on the team in 2005 with 61 goals. Look for sophomore **Joe Sherrin** (13 goals), senior **Kevin Bradley** (12 goals) and junior **Clint Wilson** (2 goals) to key the offensive attack. Arroyo has the luxury of returning five freshmen who redshirted last year, including 6-8 center **Jeff Greenwood**. Nine true freshman dot the roster in 2006, as well as four JC transfers. In goal the 49ers must replace three-year starter **Thomas Onyshko**. Sophomore **Derek Wiebe-Bailey** saw action in seven games last year and recorded a 1.71 goal against average in 63 minutes of action. Challenging Wiebe-Bailey will be senior transfer **Tyler Anderson** and junior JC transfer **Steve MacKenzie**.

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