



MPSF NEWS

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USC GAINS TOP SPOT IN 2007 MPSF PRESEASON WATER POLO COACHES' POLL

USC has earned the top spot in the MPSF Preseason Men's Water Polo Coaches Poll each of the three years it has been conducted after earning 59 points and five first-place votes from MPSF head coaches. The Trojans finished the MPSF conference season 8-0 in 2006 before taking second in both the MPSF and NCAA Championship Tournaments. No. 2 selection CALIFORNIA, with 53 points and two second-place votes, placed finished 2006 as both the MPSF and NCAA Champion. UCLA earned the third spot in the poll after generating 47 points and one first-place vote. The Bruins finished 2006 third in MPSF Championship play. In the fourth spot is UC IRVINE which tallied 45 points and one first-place vote, barely getting edged by UCLA after an eighth-place conference finish last season. STANFORD placed fifth in this year's poll with 41 points followed by No. 6 PEPPERDINE (34 points), No. 7 UC SANTA BARBARA (20 points), No. 8 LONG BEACH STATE (14 points) and No. 9 PACIFIC (11 points).

Rank	Team	Points	2006 team record:	2006 MPSF finish:
No. 1	USC	59 points (5 first-place votes)	8-0 MPSF, 26-2 overall	#2 MPSF/NCAA 2 nd Place
No. 2	California	53 points (2 first-place votes)	6-2 MPSF, 31-4 overall	#1 MPSF/NCAA Champ
No. 3	UCLA	47 points (1 first-place vote)	6-2 MPSF, 17-6 overall	#3
No. 4	UC Irvine	45 points (1 first-place vote)	2-6 MPSF, 10-21 overall	#8
No. 5	Stanford	41 points	5-3 MPSF, 17-9 overall	#4
No. 6	Pepperdine	34 points	2-6 MPSF, 13-17 overall	#9
No. 7	UC Santa Barbara	20 points	3-5 MPSF, 21-14 overall	#5
No. 8	Long Beach State	14 points	2-6 MPSF, 11-17 overall	#7
No. 9	Pacific	11 points	2-6 MPSF, 16-17 overall	#6

2007 MPSF PREVIEW

No. 1 USC (8-0 MPSF, 26-2 overall 2006) – After back-to-back appearances in the NCAA championship game, USC is primed for another powerful year under head coach **Jovan Vavic**, who is entering his 13th season at Troy. Despite the loss of two-time national champs **Juan Delgadillo** and **Thomas Hale**, the Trojans return plenty of firepower as well as the veteran goalkeeping force of **Adam Shilling** to help guide USC back toward a third straight NCAA title match. The two-meter position looks as deep as ever, with senior **Tommy Corcoran** and sophomores **J.W. Krumpholz** and **Jordan Thompson** back in the water along with newcomer **Shea Buckner**. Six Trojans garnered extra experience as members of the U.S. Junior National Team during the summer, further providing the 2007 Trojan lineup with a depth charge of talent. USC junior **Arjan Ligtenberg** is joined by sophomore teammates Krumpholz, **Anthony Artukovich**, **Matt Sagehorn** and **Nico Sardo** on Team USA for the Junior World Championships.

No. 2 CALIFORNIA (6-2 MPSF, 31-4 overall 2006) – Behind the leadership of five returning All-Americans - seniors **Mark Sheredy**, **Jeff Tyrrell**, **Michael Sharf** and **Adam Haley**, and sophomore **Spencer Warden** - the California men's water polo looks to repeat as national champions in 2007. Sheredy, a first-team All-American and 2006 NCAA Tournament MVP, returns to man the goal, while Sharf is the Golden Bears' top returning scorer with 48 goals in 2006. Cal also features Tyrrell, who knocked in the match-winning goal in last year's NCAA title match; Warden, who is a talented driver and defender; and Haley, who is one of the Bears' best two-meter defenders.

No. 3 UCLA (6-2 MPSF, 17-6 overall 2006) – Led by ninth-year head coach **Adam Krikorian**, UCLA looks to win its ninth NCAA Championship after having finished third at the 2006 MPSF Tournament and in the MPSF regular-season standings. The Bruins are led by 2006 All-America honorable mention selections **Marco Santos** at center (27 goals in 2006), **Krsto Sbutega** as the Bruins' most prolific returning goal scorer (30 goals in 2006) and goalkeeper **Chay Lapin** (4.87 GAA, 110 saves). Seniors **Justin Johnson** and **Matthew Jacobs** return to the pool in 2007 after having recorded goal totals of 15 and 13, respectively, last season. Sophomores **Scott Davidson** and **Kevin Kuga** posted strong freshman campaigns and look to continue their success this fall.

No. 4 UC IRVINE (2-6 MPSF, 10-21 overall 2006) – UC Irvine will feature one of the more veteran teams in the nation in 2007 with eight of last year's top nine scorers returning plus the return of two talented players off redshirt seasons. The Anteaters return their top three scorers from last season, led by senior driver **Colin Mello**, who notched 87 goals en route to second-team All-America and All-MPSF honors. Sophomore **Kyle Baxter** netted 38 goals and junior **Cole Bielskis** 30 in 2006. Coach **Marc Hunt**'s squad is bolstered by the return of redshirt seniors **Tim Hutten**, who sat out last year after scoring 64 goals in 2005 when he was a second-team All-America, and **Cole Bitter**, who scored 24 goals that year. Senior **Andrew Dunn** also returns after undergoing shoulder surgery. Redshirt freshman **Brandon Johnson**, a 6-4 lefthander, also will see action this season, according to Hunt. The goalkeeping position is anchored by fifth-year senior **Matt Garcia**, who recorded 314 saves in 31 starts last season. The Anteaters were 10-21 overall and 2-6 in the MPSF last year.

No. 5 STANFORD (5-3 MPSF, 17-9 overall 2006) – Head coach **John Vargas** and the young 2007 Stanford Cardinal look to build on a year in which they won 17 games. Their core of young offensive talent, including **Will Hindle-Katel**, **Drac and Janson Wigo**, and **Sage Wright**, should make for a potent scoring attack. Senior goalkeeper **Sandy Hohener** anchors a stingy veteran defense. Stanford's blend of youth and experience has the team well positioned for success.

No. 6 PEPPERDINE (2-6 MPSF, 13-17 overall 2006) – Pepperdine is coming off a rebuilding year with high hopes of competing for a National title. Under the tutelage of interim head coach, **Jack Kocur**, returning to action are four key players who were redshirted as juniors, **Adam Hewko** (national team member), **Matt MacDonell**, **Matt Digges**, and **Grant Miller**. The Waves' top goal scorer from last year, sophomore **JP Macdonell**, is representing the Junior National Team at Junior Worlds. The Waves will be exciting to watch this year all the way to the end. Long time Pepperdine head coach **Terry Schroeder** is currently at the reins of the U.S. men's national team, preparing his players for the 2008 Olympics in Beijing, China.

No. 7 UC SANTA BARBARA (3-5 MPSF, 21-14 overall 2006) – After a turnaround season in 2006 where it went 21-14 and took fifth place in the MPSF with a 3-5 conference mark, the UC Santa Barbara water polo team will look to continue its upward climb during the 2007 season. The Gauchos, did not graduate any seniors, will once again be led by senior **Ross Sinclair** this year. Sinclair, who earned Third Team All-American honors in addition to being named to the MPSF Second Team, had a breakout junior year in which he led the Gauchos in goals (64), assists (48) steals (52) and field blocks. Also returning to the Gaucho roster is sophomore **Zsombor Vincze** who collected 30 goals, 23 assists, 20 steals and earned 30 ejections for UCSB on his way to MPSF Honorable Mention accolades.

No. 8 LONG BEACH STATE (2-6 MPSF, 11-17 overall 2006) – Building off a strong finish to the 2006 campaign, Long Beach State looks to move up the ladder in the MPSF in 2007. Under the direction of second year head coach **Gavin Arroyo**, the 49ers won three of their final four regular season games and then closed out the season with a 12-11 win over UC Irvine at the MPSF Tournament. With six starters returning and 12 letter winners, 2007 looks bright for the Beach. Sophomore **Jeff Greenwood** (46 goals) is the leading returning scorer for the 49ers after making a name for himself in the MPSF as a redshirt freshman last year. Long Beach also returns seniors **Travis Buchanan** (14 goals), **Greg Henneman** (16 goals), **Nick Korsgaden** (28 goals) and **Clint Wilson** (30 goals). The 49ers also return the services of senior **Reid Tomassi** (34 goals in 2005) who missed last season due to injury. In goal, senior **Steve MacKenzie** returns after averaging 9.48 saves per game in 2006, including 14 outings where he hit double digits in saves. Arroyo looks for newcomers **Ash Blythen** (Golden West JC), **Pavle Filipovic** (Long Beach CC) and **Sean Greiner** (Esperanza HS) to contribute right away.

No. 9 PACIFIC (2-6 MPSF, 16-17 overall 2006) – The Pacific men's water polo team will be returning 15 letter winners in 2007. They will be led by juniors **Grant Hollis** (Redlands, Calif.), **Shane Mahoney** (Lodi, Calif.), and **Will Milcovich** (Walnut Creek, Calif.), along with seniors **Dragan Bakic** (Split, Croatia) and **Duje Kaurlo** (Split, Croatia). Bakic scored 69 goals and recorded 48 steals last season earning All-American honors for his third consecutive season, while Kaurlo earned partial MPSF new comer of the year honors last season after scoring 74 goals and recording a 2.24 goals per game average during his first season with the team.

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