



For Immediate Release: December 11, 2012

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MPSF VOLLEYBALL COACHES SELECT UC IRVINE IN 2013

Defending MPSF and NCAA Champion UC Irvine totaled 143 points and 11 first-place votes in topping the 2013 MPSF Men's Volleyball Preseason Coaches' Poll. The nine-point separation (143-134) between UCI and second-place BYU ties for the second largest gap between the top-two teams in the history of the poll, while the first-place vote difference of nine (11-2) is the largest ever. First-year head coach David Kniffin has four starters plus a libero returning, including first-team all-conference hitters Jeremy Dejno and Kevin Tillie. BYU, who collected 134 points along with the remaining two first-place votes, return all-conference honorees Russ Lavaja, Josue Rivera, and Taylor Sander. According to last year's final standings, Pepperdine is projected as the most improved team, placing third in the poll with 113 points. All-MPSF selections Matt West and Maurice Torres return at setter and opposite, respectively. On the heels of an MPSF Tournament Final appearance, Stanford was next in line with 110 points, as Eric Mochalski, Steven Irvin, and Brian Cook return from all-conference seasons. UCLA and Long Beach State are picked to repeat their final standing of fifth and sixth, respectively. The Bruins lost five starters (three All-Americans) from last year, though return Gonzalo Quiroga on the outside. Back for The 49ers are Taylor and Trevor Crabb, Jeff Ornee, and setter Connor Olbright. Winners of the last two regular seasons, USC placed in the middle of the poll, returning national newcomer of the year Micah Christensen at setter, national blocking leader Robert Feathers, and All-American libero Henry Cassiday, to name a few. Placing eighth and picked as the last team in the postseason conference tournament is CS Northridge. UC Santa Barbara (55), first-year MPSF participant Cal Baptist (49), Pacific (35), Hawaii (30), and UC San Diego (22) rounded out this year's poll. Conference action begins on the first weekend of 2013, when Hawaii visits BYU on Jan. 4 and 5. UCSB also hosts its annual early season tournament on that same weekend, with six MPSF teams playing three matches. The MPSF Championship Tournament begins with quarterfinal action on April 20, hosted by the top-four seeds. The semifinals are on April 25, on the home floor of the highest remaining seed to come out of the quarters, while the winner of the April 27 championship match (at the semifinal site) receives an automatic bid to the NCAA Tournament (May 2 & 4 at UCLA).

<u>Rank</u>	<u>Team</u>	<u>Points (First-Place Votes)</u>	<u>2012 Record</u>	<u>2012 MPSF Finish</u>
1	UC Irvine	143 (11)	26-5 Overall; 17-5 MPSF	#4 (MPSF/NCAA Champion)
2	BYU	134 (2)	24-7 overall; 17-5 MPSF	#2T (MPSF Semifinal)
3	Pepperdine	113	14-14 Overall; 9-13 MPSF	#7 (MPSF Quarterfinal)
4	Stanford	110	22-5 Overall; 17-5 MPSF	#2T (MPSF Final)
5	UCLA	94	22-8 Overall; 16-6 MPSF	#5 (MPSF Quarterfinal)
6	Long Beach State	85	15-15 overall; 10-12 MPSF	#6 (MPSF Quarterfinal)
7	USC	83	24-6 overall; 18-4 MPSF	#1 (MPSF/NCAA Finals)
8	CS Northridge	61	12-18 Overall; 8-14 MPSF	#8 (MPSF Quarterfinal)
9	UC Santa Barbara	55	7-19 Overall; 5-17 MPSF	#10T
10	Cal Baptist	49	12-16 Overall; 1st Year MPSF	N/A
11	Pacific	35	8-20 Overall; 5-17 MPSF	#10T
12	Hawaii	30	7-20 Overall; 4-18 MPSF	#12
13	UC San Diego	22	9-19 Overall; 6-16 MPSF	#9