



LMU Picked in Close Preseason Poll

LMU is once again narrow pick in preseason poll to win new-look WWPA.

LOS ANGELES, Calif. (Sept. 5, 2013) – With the season set to begin this weekend, Loyola Marymount narrowly edged out 2012 champion Air Force and 2011 champion UC San Diego as the pick to win the 2013 Western Water Polo Association, as chosen by the six head coaches in the 2013 WWPA Preseason Coaches' Poll.

With changes in collegiate men's water polo and an automatic bid going to the SCIAC, seven previous members who had dual membership with the WWPA will now compete solely with the SCIAC. In addition, California Baptist officially joins the league this season, giving the WWPA six members and a new look heading into the new season.

The Lions earned three first place votes and edged the last two WWPA champions by just two points as Air Force and UC San Diego were tied for second. Air Force, who won their first title since 1997 last year with a 9-7 win over the Tritons, claimed two first place votes. UCSD, who won in 2011, had one first place vote.

LMU finished 17-10 last season and returns a pair of first-team All-WWPA performers in Milutin Mitrovic and John Mikuzis. Mitrovic earned WWPA Newcomer of the Year and was an All-American in 2012 after setting the LMU freshman record for goals in a season with 72. The Lions also return the 2011 newcomer of the year Joe Ferretti, who missed 13 games last season due to injury.

Air Force had one of its best seasons in program history as they earned the WWPA title and trip to the NCAA championships. The Falcons finished 19-12 a year ago and return two-time first-team All-WWPA selection and 2012 All-American Josh Stedman. Joining him back in the line-up are fellow seniors Andrew Hamilton and Max Reilly.

UC San Diego finished the 2012 season 16-8. They will be led in 2013 by three returning starters in Matt Michalko, Cameron Ravenbach and David Higginson. Ravenbach anchors the Tritons defense in goal, earning first-team All-WWPA honors a year ago. Michalko returns at two-meter offense while Higginson will bolster the offense at driver.

The Aggies are picked to finish fourth under first year head coach Daniel Leyson as he takes over at UC Davis, who finished 14-18 a year ago. They will be led in 2013 by Chris Richardson and Bernie Rogers. Richardson, a second-team All-WWPA selection in 2012, scored seven goals against Santa Clara last season to rank third all-time in the Aggie record books.

Picked fifth this season is Santa Clara, who finished 10-20 in 2012. The Broncos will be paced by four seniors in Patrick Weiss, Theo Nasser, Tucker Carlson and Jimmy Moore. Experience will be key for the Broncos in 2013 as three of the four seniors are in their fifth season as redshirts (Carlson is a true senior). All four have earned WWPA honors in their careers, including Moore and Carlson as second-team and honorable mention, respectively, in 2012.

WWPA newcomer California Baptist has been picked sixth after finishing 17-12 a year ago. They return their top goal scorers in Matt Puig and Keith Jizmejian. Puig scored 52 goals with 28 ejections drawn, while Jizmejian had 40 goals and 34 steals.

The 2013 WWPA Championships will be held Nov. 22-24 at UC Davis. The winner earns the WWPA's automatic bid to the NCAA Championships.

2012 WWPA Preseason Coaches' Poll

1. Loyola Marymount (3 first place votes)
2. Air Force (2)
 UC San Diego (1)
4. UC Davis
5. Santa Clara
6. California Baptist

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