



NEWS RELEASE

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Chico State Predicted to Claim 2017 CCAA Baseball Champion Title

SAN RAMON – The California Collegiate Athletic Association (CCAA) baseball coaches have predicted that Defending Conference CCAA Chico State will repeat as the Conference's top team in 2017.

The Wildcats, who return seven starting position players and six pitchers, garnered 59 points and five Conference Champion votes to lead the North Division standings. Cal State Monterey Bay was picked to finish second in the North with 46 points. Cal State East Bay totaled 38 points and also collected one Champion vote, edging Sonoma State (37). San Francisco State and Stanislaus State rounded out the North standings with 18 points each.

In the South, Cal Poly Pomona repeats as the favorite, also with 59 points. The Broncos also received four Champion votes. UC San Diego was predicted to finish second for the second-consecutive season after collecting 53 points and two Champion votes. Cal State San Bernardino was third with 32 points, followed by Cal State LA (30), Cal State Dominguez Hills (25) and Cal State San Marcos (17).

Chico State entered last season's CCAA Tournament as the No. 6 seed and outlasted five Conference foes to snag the program's first tournament title since 2006 and its first Conference Champion title since 2012. The Wildcats finished its season at 35-22 overall, 21-17 in CCAA play.

All-West Region right-hander Clayton Gelfand, who finished his 2016 campaign with a 9-6 record and an 2.80 ERA will highlight the team's efforts on the bump, while three other returners — All-West Region centerfielder and 2016 CCAA Newcomer of the Year Sonny Cortez, junior infielder Cameron Santos and senior catcher Dillion Kelley — are expected to pave the way at the plate and on defense. Cortez led his team in batting average (.352), runs (67), on-base percentage (.461), hits (80), walks (34) and hit-by-pitches (15). Santos was second in the CCAA with 23 stolen bases and hit .314. 2016 Rawlings Gold Glover Kelley hit .347 had a team-leading seven homers last season.

Cal Poly Pomona is coming off of another outstanding season, which included an overall record of 42-19, the program's second-straight West Region Title, as well as its second-consecutive third place finish, nationally.

The 2017 Broncos roster shows many new faces as CPP lost 12 key players from last season, including four pitchers: 2016 Most Valuable Pitcher Michael Koval, CCAA First Team selection Max Bethell, Peter Bayer, and Zach Williams. ABCA West Region Coach of the Year Randy Betten will look to senior infielders Chris Stratton and Jason Padlo, and junior right-hander Ryan Alsworth to lead this year's roster.

Alsworth served as long relief for the Broncos last season and concluded his sophomore year with a 7-2 record and had an ERA of 2.83 in 70 inning pitched. Palo and Stratton will be a key part of the lineup after hitting .397 and .364, respectively, in 2016. Stratton also had a Conference best 25 stolen bases.

Three teams were named in the Collegiate Baseball's Preseason Poll. The Broncos debut at No. 6, UC San Diego at No. 24, and the Wildcats at No. 37.

The CCAA baseball teams will continue with a divisional schedule format for another year with the 12 Conference teams splitting into two divisions (North and South). Teams will play a four-game series against teams within the same division and a three-game series against teams outside of the division. The top three teams in each division following regular-season play will earn a bid to the CCAA postseason tournament, while the top overall seed will also be crowned the CCAA Regular-Season Champion. This year's postseason tournament will return to Banner Island Ballpark in Stockton for the fourth time in the event's 18-year history. This year's tournament will be played May 10-13.

The 2017 schedule is slated to begin next Thursday, Feb. 2, with Cal Poly Pomona, Cal State Dominguez Hills, Cal State East Bay, Cal State LA Cal State Monterey Bay and Chico State all taking the field for non-Conference play. CCAA action begins Feb. 23.

2017 CCAA BASEBALL PRESEASON COACHES' POLL

NORTH

1.	Chico State*	59 (5)
2.	Cal State Monterey Bay*	46
3.	Cal State East Bay*	38 (1)
4.	Sonoma State	37
t-5.	San Francisco State	18
t-5.	Stanislaus State	18

SOUTH

1.	Cal Poly Pomona*	59 (4)
2.	UC San Diego*	53 (2)
3.	Cal State San Bernardino*	32
4.	Cal State LA	30
5.	Cal State Dominguez Hills	25
6.	Cal State San Marcos	17

* *Tournament teams*

() *Champion votes*