

## **NCAA Division 2 Volleyball West Regional Preview:**

By: Derryl Trujillo  
Inland Sports Volleyball Correspondent

Here is our Inland Sports preview of the NCAA Division 2 West Regional hosted by Cal Baptist 11/30-12/2 at Van Dyne Gymnasium.

### **Automatic Bids:**

California Collegiate Athletic Association: Cal State San Bernardino (Tournament Champions)  
PacWest Conference: California Baptist University (Regular Season Champions)  
Great Northwest Athletic Conference: Western Washington (Tournament Champions)

### **At-Large Selections:**

1. Sonoma State (CCAA North Division regular season champion)
2. Azusa Pacific University (Pac-West Conference At-Large selection)
3. Alaska Anchorage (Great Northwest Athletic Conference At-Large selection)
4. Northwest Nazarene (Great Northwest Athletic Conference At-Large selection)
5. Central Washington (Great Northwest Athletic Conference At-Large selection)

### **Team Capsules:**

#### **California Baptist University Lancers:**

Head Coach: Branden Higa

Overall Record: 28-0

PacWest Record: 20-0

Regional Seed: #1 (Also the #1 team nationally according to most recent AVCA polling)

Players to Watch:

SR OH Lauren Hackett (3.87 kills per set and 35 aces on the year both lead the team with 239 digs and 53 blocks)

Grad Student OH McKenna Witt (3.25 kills per set and 26 service aces with 56 total blocks & 265 digs)

Grad Student OPP Madison Witt (3.45 kills per set and 16 service aces with 80 total blocks & 265 digs)

SR S Sydney Kralj (1,005 assists, 233 digs, 33 blocks)

A historic season for Lancer volleyball continues next Thursday as they will host the Western Regional in Van Dyne Gymnasium and look to end their time in Division 2 with a bang. Cal Baptist has only dropped 3 sets at home all year (2 to Biola in a 5 set win and 1 to Dominican in a win) so the friendly confines of Van Dyne will provide a formidable home court advantage.

#### **Sonoma State University Seawolves:**

Head Coach: Bear Grassl

Overall Record: 20-8

CCAA Record: 14-4

Regional Seed: #8

Players to Watch:

Soph OH Caiti Wiesner (3.2 kills per set, 282 digs, 50 blocks)

SR S Calan Seitz (2.81 kills per set, 284 to date)

SR MB Kelsey McIntire (2.73 kills per set & 48 total blocks)

Sonoma State reached the Western Regional for eight consecutive years from 2008 to 2015 before missing the field a season ago. In their return they are tasked with trying to take down an undefeated CBU team in what amounts to a true road match. At 14-4 in the CCAA North they won the regular season title but fell on day 1 of the tournament to Cal State LA forcing them to get in thru an at large selection.

### **Western Washington Vikings:**

Head Coach: Diane Flick-Williams

Overall Record: 25-3

Great Northwest Athletic Conference Record: 19-1

Regional Seed: #2

Players to Watch:

Junior OH Abby Phelps (4.15 kills per set, 31 aces, 469 digs, 58 total blocks)

Senior OPP Joellee Buckner (2.92 kills per set, 38 aces, 472 digs, 77 total blocks)

Junior S Brette Boesel (1,1125 assists to date and 236 digs)

The Vikings earned their trip to sunny Southern California by way of winning a Great Northwest Athletic Conference tournament championship. Four teams from the conference found their way into the regional so whoever wins early on Thursday will be quite familiar with their next opponent.

### **Alaska-Anchorage Seawolves:**

Head Coach: Chris Green

Overall Record: 19-10

Great Northwest Athletic Conference: 14-6

Regional Seed: #7

Players to Watch:

Junior OH Leah Swiss (3.37 kills per set, 53 aces, 332 digs, 55 total blocks)

Junior OH Chrisalyn Johnson (3.02 kills per set, 31 aces, 285 digs, 53 total blocks)

Senior DS/L Keala Kaio-Perez (625 digs and 57 aces)

After hosting the regional round in back to back years the Seawolves will now make a trip to Southern California and look to take advantage of the at-large opportunity they were given. During GNAC play Western Washington swept the season series by identical 3-1 margins (25-22, 23-25, 25-21, and 25-22 on October 7; 25-13, 25-21, 23-25, 25-20 on November 2). It's not easy to beat anyone 3 times in a season especially with that third match being on a neutral floor.

### **Northwestern Nazarene Crusaders:**

Head Coach: Doug English

Overall Record: 24-4

Great Northwest Athletic Conference: 16-4

Regional Seed: #3

Players to Watch:

Senior OH Kendra Bodine (4.36 kills per set, 22 aces, 332 digs)

Senior MB Madi Farrell (3.90 kills per set, 141 total blocks)

Senior S Hailey Cook (1,193 assists, 233 digs, 54 total blocks)

The Crusaders also come out of that extremely difficult Great Northwest Athletic Conference as an at-large selection. Against Central Washington the season series was split with each side winning on their home floor. Let's see how these GNAC matches play out with them being played at a neutral venue with the chance to advance.

### **Central Washington Wildcats:**

Head Coach: Mario Andaya

Overall Record: 19-9

Great Northwest Athletic Conference: 14-6

Regional Seed: #6

Players to Watch:

Junior OH Shelbi Mauritsen (3.62 kills per set, 23 aces, 402 digs, 59 total blocks)

Senior OH Maggie McTaggart (2.25 kills per set, 185 digs, 23 total blocks)

Sophomore DS Kyla Morgan (556 digs, 111 assists, 19 aces)

The Wildcats also earned their way here as an at-large selection out of Great Northwest Athletic Conference play. In their conference matches the home team won each encounter. Let's see who comes out of what I'm billing the GNAC showcase (the lower half of this bracket) and gets to Saturday's final.

### **California State University San Bernardino Coyotes:**

Head Coach: Kim Cherniss

Overall Record: 21-7

CCAA South: 14-3

Regional Seed: #4

Players to Watch:

Senior OH Lauren Nicholson (4.33 kills per set, 360 digs, 43 total blocks)

Sophomore OH Moira Murphy (2.46 kills per set and 35 total blocks)

Junior MB Hailey Jackson (2.44 kills per set & 107 total blocks)

The Coyotes earned their way to this regional after winning a second consecutive CCAA tournament title this time hosted by San Francisco State after winning last year's title at home. Should the Coyotes advance to Friday's semifinal there would be a rematch either way. Host

California Baptist defeated Cal State San Bernardino 25-19, 25-11, and 25-9 in the D2 West Region showcase on September 9 in Alaska. In their only conference matchup against Sonoma State the Coyotes fell 25-22, 25-19, 21-25, 31-29. It's an 18th straight regional appearance for the Coyotes and all came under Cherniss' tenure.

### **Azusa Pacific University Cougars:**

Head Coach: Chris Keefe

Overall Record: 22-6

PacWest Conference: 15-5

Regional Seed: #5

Players to Watch:

Junior OH Madison Ogas (3.01 kills per set, 179 digs, 34 total blocks)

Sophomore MB Julianne Miller (2.83 kills per set and hitting percentage of .428%, 102 total blocks)

Junior DS/S Kaylen Higa (444 assists, 168 digs)

2017 marks the program's first NCAA West Regional tournament appearance after completing their transition from GSAC and NAIA member to PacWest and full NCAA Division 2 membership. The Cougars have wins against Alaska-Anchorage (9/1 in 5 sets) and Central Washington (9/7 in 5 sets). They are 4-1 in 5 set matches.

### **Locals on Participating Teams:**

Tesa Oaks Freshman OH Cal Baptist (Woodcrest Christian)

Soleil Smith Senior OH Cal Baptist (Riverside Poly)

Lydia Morohunfolu Freshman MB Cal State San Bernardino (Roosevelt)

Diana Maile Freshman S Cal State San Bernardino (Redlands East Valley)

Sascha Dominique Sophomore OH Cal State San Bernardino (Redlands East Valley)

Hannah Barrett Junior DS/S Cal State San Bernardino (Citrus Valley)

Amanda Reifer Junior OH Cal State San Bernardino (Jurupa Valley)

Danika Young Junior S Azusa Pacific (Calvary Murrieta)

### **Tournament Schedule: 11/30**

12:30pm- #3 Northwestern Nazarene v #6 Central Washington

2:30pm or 40 minutes after- #2 Western Washington v #7 Alaska-Anchorage

5:00pm or 40 minutes after- #4 Cal State San Bernardino v #5 Azusa Pacific

7:30pm or 40 minutes after- #1 California Baptist v #8 Sonoma State

### **Tournament Schedule: 12/1**

Winner 12:30pm v Winner 2:30pm--- 5:00pm

Winner 5:00pm v Winner 7:30pm--- 7:30pm or 40 minutes after match 1

### **Tournament Schedule: 12/2**

Winner Match 5 v Winner Match 6--- 7:00pm

**Tickets:**

Ticket prices have not yet been released for this regional site. Please check the Cal Baptist athletics website for further information.