

# WVC VIBE



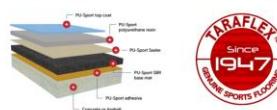
"The official newsletter of the Wisconsin Volleyball Conference"

The WVC Season is upon us! The conference will have 43 total teams (22 men's and 21 women's) participating in 2017. In an effort to create competitive balance and less travel demands on our teams the men's division will experiment with realignment this season. A qualifier tournament will be held in early February to determine the placement of teams in one of three divisions (Division 1, Division 2, and Division 3). From there teams will continue to schedule dual matches and playdates with teams within their respective divisions. For the first time, our women's teams will compete in the dual match format during the regular season in addition to the playdate weekends.

On April 7-8, 2017 all our teams will gather for the 26<sup>th</sup> Annual Wisconsin Volleyball Conference State Championships at the Milwaukee Sting Center (Menomonee Falls, WI). The MSC is an 8 Court, state of the art volleyball facility featuring Taraflex flooring, the same courts used in the Olympic Games. Festivities include: final regular season matches, state championship playoffs, regular season awards ceremony, and the Class of 2017 Hall of Fame Induction Ceremony.



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## 2017 Season Preview (By School and Team)

**Carroll University** The Men's teams at Carroll will merge into one team this season hoping to be competitive at the early season qualifier. To do so the Pioneers will need to overcome the loss of offensive weapons Marcus Boehm and Scott Wilsens (who will return to coach). Fortunately, Dillon Hock returns after leading the team in kills last season and earning All-Conference recognition. Carroll will also rely on the additions of Quentin Lamers III and Germaine Perez to have productive rookie seasons to help the team meet its goal of finishing in the top half of their division.

The Carroll Women's team will transition into the Varsity division for 2017. They are led by senior setter Mackenzie Rutledge and returning all-conference middle blocker Emma Somppi. Freshman Sydney Lamers and Mikayla Miller will contribute right away along with returning middle Allison Brill. The Lady Pioneers have high hopes for a competitive WVC Season and trip to NCVF Nationals.

**Maranatha Baptist University** The Maranatha Baptist University Sabercats will be entering the 2017 season looking to rise through the ranks. Many new faces have joined the sabercats after they lost five seniors last year, among those new faces is 5'9 Joel Depue. Joel has recently moved to the United States from Argentina where he played club volleyball. Joel's quickness and ability to read the ball makes him a consistent passer, while still being able to be an offensive force on the court. Two key players that will be returning to the Sabercats this year are Matthew Noland (2016 all conference), and Luke Hassenplug. Matthew Noland After an impressive season last year in which he earned All-Conference, looks to improve upon an already solid career. His contributions on the court as a setter and outside hitter have been invaluable to the team. This will also be his second year as the team President, and his work behind the scenes is a major asset. Hassenplug led the league in blocks per set during the 2016 season and is a dominating force on the net. The 6'6 middle never slows down and never lets up putting up massive blocks and hitting above blockers when attacking. Coach Regina DeLozier, who has over ten years of coaching experience at the college level, will lead this talented group of players. They are confident in having great success this season.

**Marquette University** After a strong 2016 season, (2nd Place Finish in the WVC, a regular season championship in the Midwest 10's, and a 9th place finish at NCVF Nationals), Marquette's varsity club team is hungry for more this 2017 spring season. Although four athletes graduated, Marquette's core group and chemistry remains virtually the same. Two players to watch include junior hitters, Dani Rivera and Chandler North. Dani does it all for Marquette! He is the team's top hitter, passer, and defender. Chandler compliments Dani with more offense and a great block. Other key players include senior setter Alex Shulski, junior outside Mike Schmitt, and junior libero Craig Belluomini. Some new faces this year include

opposite Sam Ostling, hitter Kyle Harty, and freshmen middle Bryan Carley. Marquette hopes to be a contender for the coveted WVC crown and looks forward to competing in the NCVF Nationals at Kansas City again this April!!

The Marquette Men's JV Team is poised for another strong season as they return many players from last year and have a new infusion of talent with a great freshman class. The team is led by a strong returning class highlighted by Sophomore Middle Blocker Tommy King and Junior Libero Anthony Amore. Talented newcomers will be huge for the Golden Eagles this season. Notable newcomers include Freshman Outside Hitter Conor O'neill and Graduate Student, Outside Hitter Shaun Duerr. Coming off a third place finish in the WVC in last season, Marquette hopes to return to the top in 2017. In addition to WVC Competition, Marquette is excited to join MIVA's and attend NCVF Nationals.

**Michigan Tech** enters its second season in the WVC after a successful first season saw them finish tied for 25<sup>th</sup> in NCVF Division II. The Huskies return 7 players led by Max Hultquist and club President Matthew Radloff. They will no doubt feel the loss of Brandon Schmidt and Brandon Radloff, their talented outside from a season ago. Instead Brandon Radloff returns to the sideline as coach and he will rely on the versatility of his athletes, many of whom can play multiple positions and/or play all 6 rotations. Tech experienced some early season success at the Back to the Hardwood Tournament at Michigan State winning their challenge match to finish in the silver bracket.

**UW-Eau Claire** Pierce Moriarty returns to lead the Blugolds coming of a school best 3<sup>rd</sup> place finish at NCVF Nationals in 2016. The team will need to replace both Joey Gesteland and Alex Jelacic on the outside that are lost to graduation. Luckily Eau Claire returns one of its biggest pieces in 6'10" Derek Lindquist (2<sup>nd</sup> Team All American) who hits over opposing blockers and puts up a wall that not many can get around. Getting him the ball will be their dynamic setter, Moriarty (2<sup>nd</sup> Team All-American), who will rely on the passing and defense of freshman Jared Kashou to assist him in making those around him better. If all goes well, Eau Claire is aiming for another top 10 finish at Nationals.

The Women of UW-Eau Claire look to bounce back this season with seven returners, led by President Rachel Galloway, to go along with a few newcomers. This Fall the Blugolds hosted a tournament which fundraised almost \$900 for the American Cancer Society and also won the Eagle Open at UW-La Crosse. They have their sights set on a WVC State Championship and Gold Bracket finish at Nationals.

The women's JV team returns three upperclassmen to go along with a talented group of newcomers whose versatility helped the squad to a silver division championship at their home

tournament this fall. The team will look to build trust and chemistry on and off the court as they work towards reaching the championship match at State Championships.

**UW-Green Bay** will be led by senior libero Amber Kraus who is a 4 year player for the Phoenix. She will team up with Freshman Sarah Belitz (Sheboygan North) who has provided fire power both offensively and defensively from the middle blocker position. Junior outside Kiley VanDenPlas and sophomore right side Suzy Schober led the team in kills this preseason. The Phoenix will look to improve throughout the WVC season and travel to Nationals in Kansas City.



**UW-La Crosse** placed 2<sup>nd</sup> for a second consecutive season in women's division II at NCVF Nationals in 2016. The Eagles will look to take the next step this season and are off to a good start winning the Marquette Pre-Season Tournament by defeating both Marquette and Minnesota A. Following the lead of returners Alli Duley, Bre Nedden, Kellie Shaw, and Sarah Jacobs are seven newcomers highlighted by offensive threat Elise Ditscheit, defensive standout Caitlin Supple, and last year's JV league MVP, setter Dayna Dolls. The Eagles hope the influx of new talent will help push them to the top and take home the gold this season at Nationals.

**UW-Oshkosh** The UW-Oshkosh men's Division I team will try to make history in the 2017 season as they attempt to take home their fourth consecutive National Collegiate Volleyball Federation Division I national title in Kansas City. The Titans, winners of six Division I championships, will be in the hunt again as they return three-time national player of the year Travis Hudson to run the offense. Allen Grunert (two-time first team All-American) and Wesley Morioka (two-time honorable mention All-American) will also return; as well as 2016 WVC Newcomer of the Year Eavan Mason, starting defensive players Sam Moua and Micheal Wamboldt and utility player Devin Hudson. Other returning players from the Division I team are Sammy Pedersen and Nate Leitermann, who was injured all of last season. Michigan Tech University transfer Brandon Schmidt will also join the Division I team this year as the Titans look to replace Alec Redlich and Tyler Range. The Titans have won the last eight WVC Division I regular season titles and have 11 WVC State Championships.

UWO 2 - The Division II Titans should be strong again with Adam Landgraf (2016 WVC Division II most valuable player) returning to run the offense as UW-Oshkosh looks to extend its incredible string of WVC Division II regular season championships to a 15th season. Other returning starters for the Division II team are Alex Harty, Mitch Lahmann, Tony Mack, Braeden Melton and Michael Starzec, All five received WVC Division II all-conference recognition last season. Other players that received plenty of playing time returning to the team are John Collins, Steve Cotton, Jake Martin, and Eli Miller. The Titans have also won the last eight WVC Division II state championships.

UWO 3 - The UW-Oshkosh III team turned heads last year by finishing second in both the WVC Division II regular season and state championship and taking fifth at the NCVF Division III national championships. UW-Oshkosh III was only defeated once (University of Arizona II; national champions) and beat the University of Missouri II that took second place to the Wildcats. Returning to the team are Alex Basting, Tony D'Acquisto, David Edelmann, Kyren Hamilton, Joe Kuchler, Matt Pedersen, Joey Mack, Danny Mirda and Andrew Shea.

Top newcomers to the program include Nick Davies, a 2015 First Team All-State setter, Steve Seaman, a dynamic pin hitter and Thomas Schnoor, a 6-6 middle blocker that played last year on the Titans basketball team before joining the volleyball program this year. Transfers include Ryan Albers (Clarke University) and Jim Kueper (Juniata College) that will add athleticism and size to the team.

"We will get going January 2nd for preseason," said head coach Brian Schaefer. "Our team lost a few great players but the current members are hungry to make history. We will piece all three teams together during January and once again try to give UW-Oshkosh and the WVC a national championship."

UW-Oshkosh Women's A team has seven returning players, led by senior outside hitter Jenna Lahmann, senior middle blocker Megan Leanna, and senior libero Shae Lenz. Other key returners include juniors Bethani Delmore and Nicole Johnson. The Titans competed in three preseason tournaments with impressive showings, making it to the gold bracket in every competition while reaching the finals in the opening tournament.

Oshkosh Women B is led by junior right side Kasey Hirst and junior libero Miranda Monson, and the rest of the team is made up of a very talented freshman class. Even with a majority of newcomers the B team also performed well in their first two tournaments, making it to gold and silver brackets. We are expecting big things to come from both our A and B teams and look forward to another great season in the WVC!

**UW-Milwaukee** Women's team has seven returning players and five new players and will be led by first year president Laura Theisen who is excited about this tight knit team. This year's squad is more athletically skilled, closer, and has much more intensity and energy which should lead to improved results. The Panthers will rely on a balanced attack as they have a number of well-rounded players. They are looking forward to the WVC season and improving on last year's 5<sup>th</sup> place finish in their division at Nationals.

**UW-Platteville** will depend on the leadership of junior Alisia Newport, but also has high expectations for freshman outside hitter Kayla Buros and Alixandria Jaber a freshman libero. The team did not compete in the spring of 2016 so it will take some time to become a cohesive unit, but the Pioneers are looking forward to their first Nationals trip in 4 years.

After a 9<sup>th</sup> place finish in Division II at Nationals in 2016, the Men's team from UW-Platteville will look to repeat that success in 2017. In order to do so they will need to find a way to lessen the blow of losing Patrick Stemo, Dan Callaway, and Michael Storm. The most likely candidates to carry the load this season are Nichlaus Powell on offense and Andrew Swanson on defense. The Pioneers are looking forward to the February Qualifying tournament to see which division they will compete in this season.

**UW-River Falls** The UWRF Women's club team is hoping more consistent play can help them improve upon last season's results. Despite the losses of Sam Steele, Paige Matthews, and Elisabeth Olson the Falcons will be counting on the returning leadership of Setter Autumn Thorsen, and defensive specialist Laura Peterson. Thorsen's ability to set every position well switches up the pace of the game and Peterson's levelheaded demeanor allows her to be a reliable passer in the back row. Gabby Deden also returns as a setter for the team and shows talent in every position on the court. Her all-around talent brings a dynamic presence to each game. Clai Bronkhorst is a new player this year. She is a 6-foot, right-side hitter that has a powerful hit and a tough block. The Falcons will split into "A" and "B" teams and be led by coaches Pete Galuska and Willie Nielson.

**UW-Stevens Point** Men re-enter the WVC after a one year hiatus. Only three players return with experience playing in the conference, but a young and motivated team looks to compete and build momentum to the end of the season conference tournament and the NCVF tournament. The Pointers will look to 6-rotation players Brandon Sandberg and Drew Reilly to carry a heavy load for the season as the two main outside hitters. Lengthy middle hitters Zach Bertagnoli and Bryce Pomplun will patrol the net with their block and also add some consistent offensive spark to the team. The team looks to compete at the Iowa Hawkeye tournament to give them a test before they compete at the NCVF tournament for the first time since 2014.

Sophomore lefty setter Garrett Kenyon will quarterback the offense for UWSP 2. The offensive production will be carried by middle hitter Ian Rasmussen and right side Stephen Rassch

throughout the season. Although the team may lack the height to dominate the net, the team has shown to be scrappy competitors and will look to frustrate teams with “the ball doesn’t touch the ground” mentality.

On the women’s side seniors Emily Peterson and Rachel Gasper will help lead the team through their positive court presence and consistent swings. Emily’s go-to hitter ability and powerful swing paired with Rachel’s strong blocks create huge momentum swings in tough matches. Sophomore hitter Karissa Koss and sophomore setter Val Every will help bridge the gap between seniors and freshmen with their on-court leadership and court awareness in tight situations. Stevens Point will be attending the Marquette Ranking tournament on March 4<sup>th</sup> in preparation for the National Tournament in April. The team is hoping to see the ranking tournament as only a small glimpse of the success they are looking forward to at the WVC State Championships and at Nationals.

Last year the JV Pointers were runners up for the state title; this season they are looking to win it all. Although they lose a middle, setter and libero from last year, they are confident in their ability to battle adversity and come together as a team. Senior hitter Brooke Gilbertson will help to lead the team with her experience, powerful swings, and energetic and intensity levels. Sophomore hitter Justine Drews will also help lead the team with her strong leadership skills, defense and forceful swings. Sophomore setter Chelsea Martel will help lead in matches with her smart decisions and calm court presence. The young Pointers are talented and eager to experience success this season.

**UW-Stout** Women had a great turnout for tryouts and enters 2017 WVC play with 22 talented on two teams. Both the varsity and JV teams have participated in a few preseason tournaments and gained valuable insight on the areas they need to work on while also showing the amount of potential the Blue Devils have. Stout is excited to be a part of the WVC again and is looking forward to getting on the court and competing.

**UW-Whitewater** enters WVC play with a young, but hungry team. The Warhawks add a talented setter to go along with a strong group of hitters and returning libero. This fall UW-W traveled to Michigan State to participate in the Back to the Hardwood Classic which features some of the top teams in the country. The Warhawks were also a part of a Showcase event for boy’s junior club players in the Badger Region. To close out the first semester President, Chris Adamatis helped Whitewater host its first tournament in a number of years. The Warhawks will hold a second tryout early next semester and believes the new additions will help make Whitewater a force to be reckoned with this season and beyond in the WVC.

**Winona State** Men’s team advanced to the silver division playoffs of Division 2 at Nationals a season ago. This year they are hoping for a .500 or better record in conference play and a gold

bracket appearance at Nationals. WSU will rely on a couple of position changes as Andrew Baker, who moves from outside hitter to setter and Kal Garmaker who moves from middle hitter to outside hitter. Connor Bloyer returns in the middle and Tyler Zwack returns to anchor the backcourt at the libero position.

The Winona State women had a very successful season last year winning the regular season and placing 2<sup>nd</sup> at the State Championships before finishing 5<sup>th</sup> in Women's D1 AA at Nationals. Unfortunately, the A team graduated a setter, a right side, and a libero. Consequently, this year they will rely heavily on new setter, Hailey Brown who is running a 5-1. Additionally, freshman Alison Butterfield and sophomore Alex Van Gilder are other key players that have stepped. The A Team hopes to place in the gold bracket again at nationals and place top 3 in the WVC.

The Women's B team is captained by juniors Lauren Heffel and Lindsey Wetzel and joined by Freshman Samantha Herberg. Along with contributors DS/L Lindsey Orre and Setter Jenna Goodwin the Warriors hope to put forth a competitive team in conference play at the WVC.

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