

# GREAT NORTHWEST ATHLETIC CONFERENCE

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## Wolves Seek 11<sup>th</sup> Straight GNAC Baseball Title; Debut Against UC San Diego

Great Northwest Coaches Poll	2011 Records	Pts
1. Western Oregon (3)	37-15, 27-5 (1 <sup>st</sup> )	22
2. Northwest Nazarene (2)	31-17, 16-16 (3 <sup>rd</sup> )	21
3. Montana State Billings	18-29, 9-23 (4 <sup>th</sup> )	12
4. Saint Martin's	25-22, 21-11 (2 <sup>nd</sup> )	11
5. Central Washington	14-32, 7-25 (5 <sup>th</sup> )	9

(Note: First-place votes in parenthesis. Points awarded on a 5-4-3-2-1 basis.)

SPOKANE, Wash. - Unlike any team in any GNAC sport, Western Oregon has dominated baseball since the conference was founded.

The Wolves will be gunning for their 11<sup>th</sup> consecutive GNAC title (and their 12<sup>th</sup> overall) this spring and once again *are* the pre-season favorite.

But, by the smallest margin in the history of the annual poll.

The Wolves received three of the five first-place votes and narrowly edged Northwest Nazarene by one point in the balloting.

Montana State Billings, which finished fourth last year, earned a No. 3 ranking in the poll, while last year's runner-ups Saint Martin's fell to fourth in the coaches' projections leaving Central Washington in fifth.

Western Oregon – on paper – appears well positioned to win yet another title as it returns six all-stars, including five 2011 first team selections.

Among that group is the best 1-2 pitching combo in the GNAC in Kirk Lind and Grady Wood who combined for a 15-5 record last season and ranked first (1.53) and third (2.32) in earned run average.

Wood was selected the *GNAC Pitcher-of-the-Year*, a discussion that Lind was also involved in.

Also returning as first team all-conference selections for the Wolves are outfielder Bo Folkinga, third baseman Griff Boyd and relief pitcher Ian MacDougall.

WOU's five first team selections matches the total from the other four conference schools combined.

Northwest Nazarene has three including 2011 batting champion and *GNAC Freshman of the Year* Logan Parker (.383), pitcher-outfielder Sean McDonald and first baseman Derek Bettinson.

The only other two returning first team players from the 2011 season are Central Washington third baseman Glen Reser and Montana State Billings shortstop Colby Robison.

Robison finished fourth in the conference in hitting (.335) and is one of four returnees among last year's Top 10 including Parker, Folkinga (.375) who finished second and McDonald who ranked eighth (.321).

Among last year's pitchers, seven of the 12 who had ERAs below 4.00 are back include Lind, McDonald (1.70), Wood, Tommy DeBoer (2.67) and Nate O'Bryan (3.22) of Saint Martin's, Brandon Rohde (3.35) of Central Washington and Brian Hutchings (3.86) of Montana State Billings.

The conference season will begin Mar. 9-11 as Northwest Nazarene travels to Monmouth to play Western Oregon Friday and Saturday in a four-game series matching the top two poll finishers.

Meanwhile, Montana State Billings will travel to Saint Martin's for a four-game series on Saturday and Sunday. Central Washington gets the first week bye before opening its 32-game conference slate on Mar. 17-18 at home against Saint Martin's.

Non-conference play begins this week as Saint Martin's opens a four-game series Friday at Cal Poly Pomona and Western Oregon travels to San Diego for a four-game series with perennial West Region power UC San Diego.

Central Washington makes its season debut Wednesday, Feb. 8 at San Francisco State, while Northwest Nazarene opens its season at home with a four-game series Feb. 10-11 with Minot State.

MSU Billings starts its season a week later debuting Feb. 17-19 with a four-game series at Colorado State – Pueblo.

## TEAM CAPSULES

### WESTERN OREGON Wolves

**Head Coach:** Jeremiah Robbins, Eastern Oregon '01 (212-98, 6 years)

**Assistants:** Kellen Walker, Miles Kizer, Mike McInerney

**2011 Record:** 37-15

**Conference:** 27-5, 1st

**Returning Letter Winners:** 16

**Returning Starters (4 position, 2 pitcher):** Grady Wood (P, 6-2, 200, Sr., 8-4, 2.32 ERA, GNAC Pitcher-of-the-Year, 1<sup>st</sup> team GNAC, 1<sup>st</sup> team NCBWA West Region, 2<sup>nd</sup> team Daktronics & ABCA West Region); Bo Folkinga (OF, 6-4, 215, Sr., .375, 1 hr, 21 rbi, 1<sup>st</sup> team GNAC DH, HM NCBWA West Region); Griff Boyd (3B, 6-1, 185, Sr., .291, 1, hr, 27 rbi, 1<sup>st</sup> team GNAC IF); Kirk Lind (P, 6-0, 210, Sr., 7-1, 1.53 ERA, 1<sup>st</sup> team GNAC, 2<sup>nd</sup> team Daktronics West Region, HM NCBWA West Region); Josh Solemsaas (SS, 5-9, 165, So., .277, 0 hr, 8 rbi, 2<sup>nd</sup> team GNAC); AJ Royal (OF, 6-3, 210, Sr., .247, 1 hr, 13 rbi)

**Key Returnees (30 or more at bats, 15 or more IP):** Ian MacDougall (P, 6-0, 175, Sr., 3-0, 2.08 ERA, 1<sup>st</sup> team GNAC); Jason Wilson (P, 6-1, 200, Sr., 3-0, 3.62 ERA); Eric Copenhagen (OF, 5-11, 160, Sr., .355, 0 hr, 9 rbi).

### OUTLOOK

If there has been one constant during Western Oregon's 10-year pennant run it has been pitching and defense.

Especially pitching.

In each of the past 10 seasons, Western Oregon has led the GNAC in earned run average.

Last spring they carved out a GNAC-record 2.86 ERA, breaking their own record of 3.65 set during the 2008 season.

They were even better in conference games allowing just 2.14 earned runs per nine innings.

This year shouldn't be any different.

"I like where we are on the mound," WOU coach Jeremiah Robbins, who begins his seventh season, said in a video interview recently on the school's web site.

"We have three starters back who have the ability to be even better than they were last year," Robbins said.

Back from last year's starting rotation is *GNAC Pitcher-of-the-Year* Grady Wood who led the conference in wins with eight, strikeouts with 77 and shutouts with three and ranked third in ERA with a 2.32 figure.

As good as Wood (6-2, 200, Sr., Eugene, OR – Junction City/Chemeketa) was, teammate Kirk Lind (6-0, 210, Sr., Vancouver, WA – Prairie) was nearly as good and he also returns this spring.

Lind had a 7-1 record, saved five games and led the GNAC with a 1.53 ERA and received serious consideration for the

Pitcher-of-the-Year award, as well. Lind allowed only 10 runs, all earned, in 58 2/3 innings.

Jason Wilson (6-1, 200, Sr., Bend, OR – Summit/Chemeketa) also posted impressive numbers in 2011 before encountering some academic difficulties that sidelined him for most of the season.

In four starts, Wilson had a 3-0 record and a 3.62 earned run average.

The Wolves also return three other pitchers, including their best reliever Ian MacDougall (6-0, 175, Sr., Bend, OR – Summit/Columbia Basin), who joined Wood and Lind on the GNAC first-team all-conference team.

MacDougall was voted the GNAC's top reliever. In 18 appearances he had a 3-0 record and a 2.08 ERA surrendering just 16 hits and seven runs in 26 innings.

Travis Bradshaw (6-7, 215, Sr., Woodinville, WA – Lower Columbia), who has shown great progress according to Robbins, and Travis Shigeta (6-0, 220, Sr., Kapaa, HI – Shoreline) were also members of the Wolf staff a year ago.

Bradshaw made seven appearances, pitching 8 1/3 innings. Shigeta took the ball four times, pitching four innings.

JC transfers will fill out the rest of the staff, including at least three who were all-stars at the junior college level.

Alex Bailey (6-2, 215, Jr., Federal Way, WA – Decatur) was a second team all-star at Pierce CC in 2010 splitting four decisions and posting a 4.14 ERA. He is one of three lefthanders along with MacDougall and Shigeta on the staff.

AJ Burke (6-3, 210, Jr., Hillsboro, OR – Glencoe) earned second team JC honors last season at Linn-Benton where he had a 7-4 record and a 3.18 ERA.

Tyson Flannery (6-4, 230, Jr., Fruitland, ID) also was a second team pick at Treasure Valley winning four of six decisions and posting a 2.24 ERA.

Outfielders Bo Folkinga (6-4, 215, Sr., Twin Falls, ID – Olympic) and AJ Royal (6-3, 210, Sr., Roseburg, OR – Chemeketa), third baseman Griff Boyd (6-1, 185, Sr., Medford, OR – South Medford/Mt. Hood) and shortstop Josh Solemsaas (5-9, 165, So., Lake Stevens, WA) are returning position player starters.

Folkinga ranked second in the GNAC in hitting (.375) last season and was a first team DH all-conference selection, while Royal hit .247.

Solemsaas made just four errors and Boyd made 11 as WOU led the GNAC in fielding for the sixth consecutive year and the eighth time in 10 seasons.

Both were all-stars. Solemsaas, who hit .277, was a second team GNAC pick, while Boyd hit .291 and drove in 27 runs, third best on the team.

Of WOU's other returning letter winners only Eric Copenhagen (5-11, 160, Sr., Canby, OR – Mt. Hood) had more than 26 at bats. He played in 28 games, starting 21, and batting .355. He also stole 10 bases.

Copenhagen finished the season with a six-game hitting streak batting .500 (8 of 16 during that stretch).

Among the new position players for the Wolves are two Division I players and three JC all-stars.

Shortstop Blake Miller (6-2, 195, Jr., Salem, OR – South Salem) was a two-year starter at Sacramento State, batting .293 and .289 in his freshman and sophomore seasons. He had nine home runs and 52 RBI including, seven and 30 last season and already has 108 career hits.

Catcher Scott David (6-1, 205, Jr., Pleasanton, CA – Amador Valley) played in 32 games in two seasons at Fresno State and had five hits in 34 at bats.

From the JC ranks, Robbins added second baseman Michael Gange (5-6, 150, Jr., Marysville, WA – Pilchuck) and outfielder David Amberson (6-2, 205, Jr., Everett, WA – Cascade) from Everett CC and outfielder Matt Nylen (6-2, 205, Jr., Damascus, OR - Clackamas) from Mt. Hood.

Gange was a first team all-star at Everett, hitting .311 and driving in 31 runs, while Amberson was a second team selection batting .323 and driving in 15.

Nylen earned second team honors at Mt. Hood in 2010 when he hit .328 and had four home runs and 24 RBI.

#### **NORTHWEST NAZARENE Crusaders**

**Head Coach:** Tim Onofrei, Albertson '98 (216-280, 10 years)

**Assistants:** Skyler Mantz, Eric Duke, Roger Evenson, Tyler Grant

**2011 Record:** 31-17

**Conference:** 16-16, 3rd

**Returning Letter Winners:** 12

**Returning Starters (2 position, 1 position/pitcher, 2 pitchers):** Sean McDonald (OF-P, 5-9, 170, Sr., .321, 3 hr, 34 rbi, 5-1, 5 saves, 1.70 ERA, 1<sup>st</sup> team GNAC OF & P); Logan Parker (OF, 6-1, 185, So., .383, 0 hr, 24 rbi, GNAC Freshman of the Year, 1<sup>st</sup> team GNAC, 2<sup>nd</sup> team ABCA West Region, HM NCBWA West Region); Derek Bettinson (1B, 6-0, 195, Sr., .296, 3 hr, 30 rbi, 1<sup>st</sup> team GNAC); Charles Pollock (P, 6-1, 210, Sr., 5-4, 4.85 ERA); Zeb Sneed (P, 6-5, 195, Jr., 2-4, 4.15)

**Key Returnees (30 or more at bats, 15 or more IP):** Zach Morse (P-UT, 6-2, 170, Sr., .268, 0 hr, 6 rbi); Ryan Brown (P, 5-8, 150, Sr., 1-1, 3.28 ERA); Patrick Patterson (P, 5-10, 195, Sr., 1-3, 5.18 ERA)

#### **OUTLOOK**

Northwest Nazarene posted its second 30-win season last year (it won 32 in 2008) finishing 31-17, including 16-16 in conference play. Its winning percentage of .646 was the best in school history.

With three first team all-stars back among five returning starters, the Crusaders might have the best opportunity to at least slow down the Western Oregon title train.

Back to lead Northwest Nazarene is outfielder Logan Parker (6-1, 185, So., Jerome, ID), first baseman Derek Bettinson (6-0, 195, Sr., Boise, ID – Centennial) and pitcher-outfielder Sean McDonald (5-9, 170, Sr., Boise, ID).

Between them, the three players actually won four first-team GNAC plaques.

McDonald claimed one for both positions after hitting .321 and driving in 34 runs and posting a 5-1 record, picking up five saves and carving out a 1.70 ERA.

Only WOU's Daniel Dillard, who had 55, drove in more runs and only the Wolves' Kirk Lind had a lower ERA. McDonald's batting average ranked eighth in the GNAC.

Parker had a phenomenal season to earn *GNAC Freshman-of-the-Year* and second team ABCA all-star honors. He won the GNAC batting title with a .383 average and drove in 24 runs.

Bettinson also had an outstanding debut season after transferring from Blue Mountain hitting .296, tying McDonald for the team lead in home runs with three and ranking third in RBI in 30.

The only other returning starters for the Crusaders are pitchers Charles Pollack (6-1, 210, Sr., Boise, ID) and Zeb Sneed (6-5, 195, Jr., Twin Falls, ID), who combined to start 19 games.

Pollack had a 5-4 record and a 4.85 ERA in 12 appearances, including nine starts. Sneed was 2-4 and had a 4.15 ERA. He made 12 appearances, starting 10.

Of NNU's other seven returning lettermen, utility player Zach Morse (6-2, 170, Sr., Eagle River, AK – Chugiak) and pitchers Ryan Brown (5-8, 150, Sr., Eagle, ID) and Patrick Patterson (5-10, 195, Sr., Hailey, ID – Wood River) saw the most playing time.

Morse hit .268 in 20 appearances including 17 starts. Brown had a 1-1 record and a 3.28 ERA in 17 relief appearances and Patterson was 1-3 and had a 5.18 ERA in 11 games, starting three.

Three JC all-stars and four four-year transfers are among NNU's newcomers.

Outfielder Zach Steele (6-2, 190, Sr., Santa Barbara, CA – Santa Ynez) transferred from Chico State where he had one home run and seven RBI in 39 plate appearances, while first baseman Kris Bos (5-9, 195, Jr., Jerome, ID) transferred from Corban where he hit .238.

Infielder Greg Hata (6-2, 175, Jr., Yakima, WA – Whitworth) previously played at Whitworth where he hit .218 in the 2010 season and will contribute at third base.

Catcher Jamie Mitchell (6-0, 210, Jr., Calgary, AB – Bowness) transferred from Mt. Olive College, a NCAA Division II school in North Carolina.

Mitchell, who played in eight games and had two hits in four at bats at Mt. Olive, should provide steady defense behind the plate and add pop to the lineup offensively.

Another catching candidate is freshman Kaleb DeHaas (6-0, 190, Coeur d'Alene, ID).

Among the JC transfers is outfielder Alex Barbee (5-10, 205, Jr., Boise, ID – Borah) who was a first team all-star at Treasure Valley where he batted .335 and had eight home runs and 45 RBI.

Infielder Jon Matos (6-0, 175, Jr., Lacey, WA – River Ridge) was also a first team NWAACC all-star at Treasure Valley, hitting .342 and driving in 27 runs.

Infielder Fernando Robles (6-0, 180, Jr., Caldwell, ID) earned second team honors at Wenatchee Valley batting .303 with two home runs and 19 RBI.

Another JC transfer is outfielder Charlie Gorzo (6-2, 220, Jr., Murrietta, CA), who hit .273 at Palomar CC in California.

### **MSU BILLINGS Yellowjackets**

**Head Coach:** Rob Bishop, Jamestown '94 (18-29, 1 year)

**Assistants:** Chris Martin, Cory Hansen, Jim Klemann, Dan McKinney

**2011 Record:** 18-29

**Conference:** 9-23, 4th

**Returning Letter Winners:** 12

**Returning Starters (2 position, 2 pitchers):** Colby Robison (SS, 6-1, 190, Jr., .335, 2 hr, 34 rbi, GNAC Newcomer-of-the-Year, 1<sup>st</sup> team GNAC, 2<sup>nd</sup> team NCBWA & Daktronics West Region); Brian Hutchings (P, 6-0, 190, Sr., 4-6, 3.86 ERA, HM GNAC); Austin Rue (3B, 5-9, 160, Jr., .214, 0 hr, 11 rbi); Zachary Smith (P, 6-1, 170, Sr., 3-5, 7.29)

**Key Returnees (30 or more at bats, 15 or more IP):** Blake Loran (1B-C, 6-0, 200, So., .259, 0 hr, 4 rbi); Blake Nelson (OF, 6-2, 210, Sr., .200, 0 hr, 6 rbi); Andrew Ballinger (C, 6-0, 170, So., .194, 0 hr, 2 rbi); Trevor Wilson (1B-OF, 6-1, 205, Sr., .182, 1 hr, 4 rbi); Kyle Gieselman (P, 5-10, 185, Sr., 2-2, 4.30 ERA)

### **OUTLOOK**

Rob Bishop begins his second season at Billings after guiding his team to an 18-29 record last year. That was a 6

½ game improvement over Montana State Billings' record the previous season

Bishop returns 12 players, but just four starters off last year's team. One of the players – shortstop Colby Robison (6-1, 190, Jr., Rexburg, ID – C. of Southern Idaho) – was one of the top players in the league last season.

Robison ranked fourth in the GNAC in batting (.335) and tied NNU's Sean McDonald for second in runs batted in (34) in winning *GNAC Newcomer-of-the-Year* honors.

Robison was also a first team GNAC all-star and a second team NCBWA (National Collegiate Baseball Writers) and Daktronics (SIDs) all-region selection.

Returning pitcher Brian Hutchings (6-0, 190, Sr., San Luis Obispo, CA) also earned all-conference honors after winning four of 10 decisions and posting a 3.86 ERA.

The only other two returning starters for the Yellowjackets are third baseman Austin Rue (5-9, 160, Jr., Clancy, MT – Miles CC), who hit .214, and pitcher Zachary Smith (6-1, 170, Sr., Palmyra, NE), who had a 3-5 record and 7.29 earned run average.

Four other returning position players had 30 or more official at bats including first baseman-catcher Blake Loran (6-0, 200, So., Billings, MT), outfielder Blake Nelson (6-2, 210, Sr., Vancouver, WA – Tacoma CC), catcher Andrew Ballinger (6-0, 170, So., Bozeman, MT) and first baseman/outfielder Trevor Wilson (6-1, 205, Sr., Riverton, WY – Miles CC).

Loran hit .259, while Nelson batted .200. Ballinger and Wilson had .194 and .182 averages. Between the four, they had one home run and 16 RBI.

Also returning on the mound are relievers Kyle Gieselman (5-10, 185, Sr., Sheridan, WY – Eastern Arizona) and Mike Waldorf (6-1, 205, Sr., Butte, MT – Dawson CC) who came out of the bullpen a combined 26 times.

Gieselman made 18 appearances, starting two, and had a 2-2 record and a 4.30 ERA in 44 innings. Waldorf made 10 appearances and had a 0-1 record and a 6.94 ERA in 11 2/3 innings.

Bishop recruited numerous junior college players and also added a Division I transfer to held fill in some of the holes on his roster.

Outfielder Matt Comer (5-10, 185, Sr., Bozeman, MT) transferred from Seattle University where he batted .202 in 36 games, including 25 starts.

Comer previous played at Treasure Valley, earning NWAACC East Region MVP honors in 2010 when he ranked fifth in batting (.399) and had nine home runs and 55 RBI.

Among the other JC additions include pitchers Derek Allen (6-0, 180, Jr., Whitehall, MT), Matt Eames (6-4, 200, Jr., Billings, MT), Zack Ketcher (6-1, 165, Jr., Downey, CA), Samuel Paterson (5-9, 165, Jr., McMinnville, OR), Bobby Ragasa (5-9, 190, Jr., Milwaukie, OR), Mack Unruh (6-0, 180, Jr., Salem, OR), Jacob Williams (6-0, 195, Jr., Bridger, MT) and Jordan Wilson (6-0, 190, Jr., Absarokee, MT), catcher Orrin Pyrah (5-10, 195, Jr., Lewistown, MT) and outfielder Justin Harcharik (5-11, 175, Jr., Butte, MT).

Allen was a first team all-star at Treasure Valley in 2010 when he had a 7-1 record and a 2.18 ERA. Eames played at CBC in 2010 and had a 2-2 record and a 1.64 ERA.

Ketcher earned honorable mention all-league honors at Long Beach City College where he posted a 3.48 ERA. Paterson was 5-5 with a 2.32 ERA at Linn-Benton, and Ragasa was 4-3 with a 1.56 ERA in 2010 at Linn-Benton.

Unruh was a second team all-star at Linn-Benton in 2010 when he had a 2-2 record and a 1.41 ERA, while Williams had a 3-3 record and four saves at Miles CC. Wilson finished the 2011 season with a 3-3 record and a 3.39 ERA at Spokane Falls.

Pyrah was a second team all-star at Southwestern Oregon, batting .308 and driving in 13 runs, while Harcharik hit .305 and had 19 RBI in earning all-conference honors at Miles CC.

#### **SAINT MARTIN'S Saints**

**Head Coach:** Ken Garland, Willamette '82 (67-81, 3 years; Overall, 9 years, 139-243-1)

**Assistants:** Matt Acker, Shane Schoeneberg, Joe Dominek, Kyle Baskett, Casey Mitchell

**2011 Record:** 25-22

**Conference:** 21-11, 2<sup>nd</sup>

**Returning Letter Winners:** 14 (1 from 2010)

**Returning Starters (5 position, 2 pitchers):** Josh Grenier (3B, 5-11, 195, Sr., .288, 1 hr, 22 rbi, 2<sup>nd</sup> team GNAC); Zach Leonard (C, 5-9, 185, Sr., .264, 0 hr, 8 rbi, 2<sup>nd</sup> team GNAC); Bobby Twedt (2B, 5-10, 180, Jr., .290, 0 hr, 18 rbi, HM GNAC); Tommy DeBoer (P, 5-8, 150, Sr., 5-3, 2.67 ERA, HM GNAC); Travis Jones (1B, 5-11, 240, Sr., .273, 2 hr, 19 rbi); Spencer Dodd (1B, 6-1, 185, So., .245, 0 hr, 5 rbi); Nate O'Bryan (P, 5-10, 175, Sr., 5-3, 3.22 ERA)

**Key Returnees (30 or more at bats, 15 or more IP):** Kaleb Wilson (P, 6-2, 210, Sr., 2-3, 12 saves, 4.42 ERA, 2<sup>nd</sup> team GNAC); Sean Goforth (P, 6-3, 200, Sr., 0-2, 6.75 ERA)

#### **OUTLOOK**

The Saints finished second last season in the GNAC with a 21-11 conference record, matching the best league mark of a non-Western Oregon team in conference history.

Northwest Nazarene also went 21-11 during the 2010 season.

The Saints return 14 letter winners including five all-stars. The all-star total is the second most in the GNAC trailing only Western Oregon.

Third baseman Josh Grenier (5-11, 195, Sr., Tumwater, WA), catcher Zach Leonard (5-9, 185, Sr., Spanaway, WA – Bethel) and reliever Kaleb Wilson (6-2, 210, Sr., Lacey, WA – North Thurston) were all second team selections.

Grenier batted .288 and drove in 22 runs, while Leonard hit .264 and plated eight. Wilson had a 2-3 record and set a GNAC record with 12 saves, while posting a 4.42 ERA.

Second baseman Bobby Twedt (5-10, 180, Jr., Sedro-Woolley, WA) and starting pitcher Tommy DeBoer (5-8, 150, Sr., Olympia, WA – Capital) were honorable mention picks.

Twedt ranked second on the team in batting with a .290 average, while DeBoer led the Saints with a 2.67 earned run average posting a 5-3 record.

Three other starters are back for the Saints, including Travis Jones (5-11, 240, Sr., Mililani, HI), Spencer Dodd (6-1, 185, So., Eagle, ID) and Nate O'Bryan (5-10, 175, Sr., Olympia, WA).

Jones split his time between first base and DH and hit .273. Dodd made 27 of his 28 starts at first and hit .245.

O'Bryan had a 5-3 record and a 3.22 ERA starting nine times. He also made six relief appearances.

Of the other returning letter winners, Alex Bielaski (6-0, 225, So., Bellevue, WA) had the most at bats, batting .345 (10 of 29).

Sean Goforth (6-3, 200, Sr., Federal Way, WA) and Todd Beamer pitched 12 times, two as a starter, and had a 0-2 record and a 6.75 ERA in 25 1/3 innings.

Five junior college players and 14 freshmen are among the newcomers on the Saint roster.

The JC transfers include utility Bret Bitow (5-10, 140, So., Puyallup, WA) who hit .271 at Lower Columbia, infielder Mario Sanelli (6-0, 185, Jr., Issaquah, WA) who batted .265 in 2010 at Columbia Basin and pitcher Brendan Jeffers (6-5, 240, Jr., Issaquah, WA – Liberty), who had a 4-2 record and three saves at Green River CC.

JC additions also include infielder Luke Bessel (6-0, 200, Jr., Woodinville, WA – Bellevue Christian) from Shoreline CC and pitcher Anthony Klonitsko (6-0, 210, Jr., Olympia, WA – Black Hills) from Grays Harbor.

#### **CENTRAL WASHINGTON Wildcats**

**Head Coach:** Desi Storey, Central Washington '94 (422-500-1, 20 years)

**Assistants:** Abe Silvestri, Scott Wilson, Ryan Voelkel

**2011 Record:** 14-32

**Conference:** 7-25, 5<sup>th</sup>

**Returning Letter Winners:** 14

**Returning Starters (6 position, 3 pitcher):** Glen Reser (3B, 6-1, 200, Sr., .301, 1 hr, 25 rbi, 1<sup>st</sup> team GNAC, ABCA Gold Glove); Brady Kincannon (1B, 6-3, 195, Sr., .310, 2 hr, 11 rbi, 2<sup>nd</sup> team

GNAC); Brandon Rohde (P, 6-3, 215, Sr., 2-7, 3.35 ERA, 2<sup>nd</sup> team GNAC); Jimmy Ryerson (OF, 5-11, 175, Jr., .306, 1 hr, 15 rbi, HM GNAC); Brett Bielec (OF, 5-10, 180, Sr., .296, 0 hr, 9 rbi); David Leid (C, 5-10, 200, Sr., .252, 3 hr, 14 rbi); Derrick Webb (SS-3B, 6-2, 205, Sr., .252, 3 hr, 23 rbi); Kyle Long (P, 6-0, 165, Jr., 1-8, 6.29); Ryan Hastings (P, 6-2, 215, Sr., 2-6, 6.34 ERA)

**Key Returnees (30 or more at bats, 15 or more IP):** Brandon Wang (2B, 5-10, 180, Sr., .329, 0 hr, 12 rbi); Deren Jones (IF-P, 6-0, 190, Sr., .258, 0 hr, 3 rbi); Ethan Sterkel (OF, 6-2, 205, So., .118, 1 hr, 2 rbi)

## OUTLOOK

Central Washington has the most returning starters in the GNAC and has hopes to bounce back from last year's 14-32 record.

Six position players and three pitchers are among nine returning starters for coach Desi Storey, who begins his 21<sup>st</sup> season as head coach in Ellensburg.

The Wildcats return three .300 hitters, the most of any team in the conference, including all-league third baseman and ABCA Gold Glove winner Glen Reser.

Reser (6-1, 200, Sr., Spokane, WA – Mead/Walla Walla CC) hit .301 last season and drove in a team-high 25 RBI. Joining Reser on the GNAC all-conference team a year ago were first baseman Brady Kincannon (6-3, 195, Sr., Federal Way, WA – Decatur/Chemeketa CC) and pitcher Brandon Rohde (6-3, 215, Sr., Gig Harbor, WA – UW).

Kincannon, who will DH and also play in the infield, hit .310 to earn second team all-league honors, while Rohde had a 3.35 ERA though he had just a 2-7 record and was also a second team selection.

Outfielder Jimmy Ryerson (5-11, 175, Jr., Seattle, WA – Roosevelt/Shoreline) earned honorable mention honors batting .306.

Also back from last year's starting lineup are catcher David Leid (5-10, 200, Sr., Carson City, NV – Feather River), shortstop Derrick Webb (6-2, 205, Sr., Ephrata, WA – LCC), outfielder Brett Bielec (5-10, 180, Sr., Port Orchard, WA – North Mason/Tacoma CC) and pitchers Kyle Long (6-0, 165, Sr., Edmonds, WA – Bellevue) and Ryan Hastings (6-2, 215, Sr., Lynden, WA – Olympic).

Leid hit .252 and tied Webb for the team home run lead with three. Webb had the same average as Leid, but plated more runs driving in 23 to 14 by the Wildcat catcher.

Long started 10 games and tied WOU's Grady Wood for most complete games with five though his ERA was considerably higher at 6.29. He also won just one of nine decisions.

Hastings had a 2-6 record and a 6.34 ERA for the Wildcats in 11 appearances, including seven starts.

Among the other returnees for the Wildcats is second baseman Brandon Wang (5-10, 180, Sr., Mill Creek, WA – Jackson/Edmonds CC), who hit .329 in 23 games, including 20 starts. Wang batted .440 against conference champion Western Oregon going 11 for 25.

Also back is Deren Jones (6-0, 190, Sr., Lewiston, ID – Blue Mountain), who batted .258 going eight for 31 and local product Ethan Sterkel (6-2, 205, So., Ellensburg, WA), who had four hits in 34 at bats. Jones will also pitch for the Wildcats.

Among the new recruits for the Wildcats are Matt Herbert (6-0, 195, Jr., Ellensburg, WA), who could start in left field, Chris Hashimoto (5-11, 211, Jr., Kirkland, WA – Lake Washington) and Brett Gray (6-2, 225, Jr., Ephrata, WA) who may split playing time at first, catcher Kyle Sani (6-1, 245, Jr., Kennewick, WA – Southridge) and pitchers Davis Engel (5-11, 150, So., Ellensburg, WA) and Randy Button (6-3, 190, Jr., Allyn, WA – North Mason).

Herbert hit .304 and had three home runs and 12 RBI last season at Big Bend, while Hashimoto hit .236 at Edmonds CC.

Gray was a second team NWAACC all-star at Big Bend, batting .286 and driving in 32 runs.

Sani perhaps comes in with the best credentials of the JC transfers, batting .393 at Walla Walla CC in earning first team NWAACC honors in the wood-bat league. He also had three home runs and 18 RBI.

Engel had impressive numbers at Skagit Valley posting a 5-2 record and a 2.16 ERA to earn second team accolades. Button also put up good numbers at Big Bend, winning six of nine decisions and posting a 3.47 ERA.

Also among the JC transfers are Alex Bushman (6-0, 190, Jr., Billings, MT – Central Catholic), who was a first team all-star at Columbia Basin where he hit .302 and drove in 20 runs. He could see time on the hill as well as the infield for the 'Cats.

Other JC transfers include outfielder Spencer Humphrey (5-10, 185, Jr., Dublin, CA), who redshirted one season at Sacramento State before playing two seasons at Chabot College in California, and pitchers Stinson Ott (5-11, 188, Jr., Richland, WA), Jason Lotzer (6-3, 194, Jr., Lynnwood, WA) and Tanner Knutson (5-11, 205, Jr., Deer Park, WA).

Ott had a 5-5 record and 2.88 ERA at CC of Spokane, while Lotzer had a 1-0 record and three saves and a 1.46 ERA at Edmonds in 2010. Knutson had four saves and a 1.80 ERA at Spokane in 2010.