

Northwestern Tabbed as American Lacrosse Conference Favorite NU's Hannah Nielsen picked as preseason player of the year

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In a vote of the league's five head coaches, Northwestern University, the four-time defending national champions, have been picked to win their fifth ALC title in a row. The 'Cats have won 23 consecutive conference games and have not lost since the final regular-season game of 2004. Northwestern senior Hannah Nielsen, the 2008 Tewaaron Trophy recipient, has also been selected as the preseason Player of the Year.

Nielsen, who ranks third all-time in Division I in career assists with 141 and sits just eight assists away from second place, is the reigning ALC Player of the Year. She is joined on the preseason team by four teammates, including Hilary Bowen, Morgan Lathrop, and Meredith Frank. Vanderbilt, Johns Hopkins, and Penn State, who are ranked second, third, and fourth in the preseason ALC poll, each claim two student-athletes on the team. Ohio State's Maghan Beaudrault, the 2008 ALC Rookie of the Year, rounds out the team.

Bowen, Lathrop, and Frank were each All-Americans in 2008 as the Wildcats won their fourth consecutive national championship. Frank was the 2006 ALC Rookie of the Year, while Lathrop was the 2007 ALC Goalie of the Year.

Cara Giordano and Carter Foote both earned All-ALC honors for Vanderbilt in 2008 as Giordano was a first team honoree while Foote was named to the second team. Johns Hopkins' Sam Schrum was the 2007 ALC Rookie of the Year, and Angela Hughes was a second team All-Conference honoree in 2008. Theresa Bucci and Kerry Shea from Penn State were both named to the ALC Second Team in 2008.

The American Lacrosse Conference will sponsor the 2009 conference tournament at Penn State, April 30 - May 2. The winner of the tournament will earn the conference's automatic bid to the NCAA Championships for 2009.

ALC Projected Order of Finish

1. Northwestern
2. Vanderbilt
3. Johns Hopkins
4. Penn State
5. Ohio State

ALC Preseason All-Conference Team

Maghan Beaudrault, Ohio State
Hilary Bowen, Northwestern
Theresa Bucci, Penn State
Cara Giordano, Vanderbilt
Morgan Lathrop, Northwestern
Carter Foote, Vanderbilt
Meredith Frank, Northwestern
Angela Hughes, Johns Hopkins
Hannah Nielsen, Northwestern
Sam Schrum, Johns Hopkins
Kerry Shea, Penn State
Danielle Spencer, Northwestern