

Argo Athletes Excel Academically; Women's Basketball Top in the Country

Great Falls, MT – The University of Great Falls places great emphasis on the “student” part of being a student-athlete. The result of that emphasis is very clear as seven Argo athletic teams achieved national recognition by the NAIA, with Women's Basketball earning distinction as the top program in the nation.

“We are extremely pleased with the academic recognition of our student-athletes by the NAIA. Our student-athletes have a passion for learning as well as competing. These recognitions reflect the leadership and support of our coaches, who place academic achievement and progress first,” stated Eugene McAllister, President of the University of Great Falls.

The Women's Basketball team was the top-ranked academic team among the 243 universities participating in the NAIA women's basketball division, with a GPA of 3.65. The Women's Basketball Coaches Association Academic Top 25 Team Honor Roll recognized the University of Great Falls team with the highest combined grade point average (GPA), inclusive of all student-athletes on their roster for the entire season.

They are the first team in the state of Montana to receive this honor.

“One of our team goals this year was to achieve academic excellence in the classroom and I am astonished with the results they have achieved. UGF is a special place and we have great professors who go out of their way to work with our student athletes and give them a great educational experience,” stated Bill Himmelberg, Head Women's Basketball coach.

Six additional Argo Athletic programs earned national recognition as NAIA Scholar Teams for achieving a minimum 3.0 team GPA. Argo teams earning this honor are as follows:

1. Men's Golf 3.36 GPA
2. Women's Soccer 3.36 GPA
3. Woman's Softball 3.36 GPA
4. Woman's Volleyball 3.25 GPA
5. Men's Basketball 3.19 GPA
6. Men's Wrestling 3.14 GPA

In addition to team honors, numerous University of Great Falls student-athletes received NAIA Academic All-American and Academic All-Conference honors.

Student-athletes receiving NAIA National Academic All-American honors are:

Men's Basketball-Lucas Hambsch and Dyston Madsen
Men's Soccer-James Silwa and Joshua Friesner
Men's Wrestling-Michael French, Ryan Leonard, and Clark Hensley
Women's Basketball-Katie Wright and Andrea Ramos
Women's Soccer-Jenell Jackson, Melissa Jessop, Ashly Pezel, and Quinn Wilson
Women's Softball-Lindsay Cline, Stacy Gray, Casey Olson, Jennifer Stewart, and Brittanie Thibodeaux
Woman's Volleyball-Tosha Nunes, Jessica Weber, Kali Schmidt, and Jessica Birgenheier

Student-athletes earning Frontier Conference Academic All-Conference recognition are:

Men's Basketball-Tom Donnelly, Trevor Fehr, Jesse Adams, Lucas Hambsch, Mark Celaya, Dyston Madsen, and Nathan Bailey

Men's Golf-Kevin Sullivan and Josh Wittman
Andrea Bushley and Sami Pack, Woman's Golf;
Men's Soccer-James Silwa, Joshua Friesner, David Jimenez, Zachary Johnson, Miguel Mendez, Francisco Martinez, and Jesus Mendez
Women's Basketball-Aline Lino, Marissa Skogen, Katie Wright, Kara Peterson, and Andrea Ramos
Women's Soccer-Teslynn Anderson, Carly Armstrong, Cass Gross, Jenell Jackson, Melissa Jessop, Ashly Pezel, Sherry Walters, and Quinn Wilson
Women's Volleyball-Tosha Nunes, Jessika Weber, Jessica Birgenheier, Kali Schmidt, Maggie McCall, Kelsey VanUden, Samantha Garven,

Student-athletes receiving a perfect 4.0 GPA are:

Cheer/Dance-Elizabeth Gold and Caitlin Hogan
Men's Basketball-Dyston Madsen and Jessie Zuidema
Men's Cross-Country/Track- Cullen Cantwell, Daniel Lants, Zachary Liedtke, Timothy Taylor, and Shane Weldon
Men's Golf-Kurtis Burrall and Jeffery LePard
Men's Soccer- James Silwa
Men's Wrestling-Juan Enriquez, Colton Ewing, Clark Hensley, Kaden Piva, and Clayton Vermulm
Women's Basketball-Kylie Diedrich, Josi Herron, Alysha Kopec, Kara Peterson, Katie Wright, and Jamie Young
Women's Cross Country/Track-Emily Busby, Haley Busby, Brandi Eloff, Tamara Greenlief, and Danielle Keating
Women's Rodeo-Kyra Block
Women's Softball- Jennifer Andrews, Nicole Banach, Stacy Gray, and Kelli O'Brien, and Casey Olson
Women's Volleyball-Jessica Birgenheier, Taylor King, Tosha Nunes, and Jessika Weber
Women's Soccer- Bryanna Gordon, and Ashly Pezel

"The University is very proud of the academic accomplishments of our student-athletes. Their hard work in the classroom, as well as on the court or field is evident through such outstanding honors," noted Gary Ehnes, University of Great Falls Athletic Director.