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For Immediate Release

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August 6, 2008

2008 GSC VOLLEYBALL PRE-SEASON RELEASE

UWF PREDICTED TO WIN GSC CHAMPIONSHIP; HARDING THE CHOICE TO WIN THE WEST

Birmingham, AL— As volleyball season rapidly approaches, the leagues coaches predicted how the teams would finish and also named the top players returning in the Gulf South Conference. This year’s pre-season release also highlights the top newcomers into the conference, along with the continuation of the conference initiated “Match of the Week” for 2008.

When it comes to hoisting the GSC Championship trophy, West Florida was selected to capture the hardware. West Florida was last year’s East Division champion, and advanced to the title match at the conference tournament. Led by returning East Division Player of the Year Luciana Rapach, UWF is now the favorite to host the GSC Tournament later this fall.

The league’s coaches feel that Harding will once again be victorious in the West, finishing with the most votes among the division’s squads. Harding had another strong season in 2007, winning the West Division for the sixth consecutive year and serving as the host for the conference championship. The Lady Bisons had three players named to the preseason All-GSC squad, and are led by Head Coach Keith Giboney, who won his fourth consecutive GSC West Division Coach of the Year award in 2007.

2008 GSC VOLLEYBALL PRE-SEASON COACHES’ POLL

In this year’s Pre-Season Poll, **West Florida** was chosen to capture the crown in the East. The Lady Argonauts picked up 35 votes, good enough for the top spot in the division. UWF nudged out North Alabama, as the Lions picked up two first-place votes and 32 points overall to finish in second place. **West Georgia** came in third, with 23 points, followed by a tie between **Alabama-Huntsville** and **West Alabama** at the fourth spot with 19 points. **Valdosta State (10)** and **Montevallo (9)** closed out the scoring in the East.

In the West, six-time defending champ **Harding** was chosen to win the title again, picking up 34 votes to ensure its spot at the top of the division. **Arkansas Tech** came in the silver medal position, picking up two first place votes and 31 points. Next was **Henderson State** with 28 points followed by **Arkansas-Monticello** who claimed the fourth spot with 16. **Christian Brothers (13)**, **Southern Arkansas (13)** and **Ouachita Baptist (12)** finished out the West Division poll.

SCHOOL	EAST DIVISION						TOTAL
	1st	2nd	3rd	4th	5th	6th	
West Florida	5	1	—	—	—	—	35
North Alabama	2	4	—	—	—	—	32
West Georgia	—	1	3	2	—	—	23
Alabama-Huntsville	—	—	2	3	1	—	19
West Alabama	—	1	1	2	2	—	19
Valdosta State	—	—	1	—	1	4	10
Montevallo	—	—	—	—	3	3	9

SCHOOL	WEST DIVISION						TOTAL
	1st	2nd	3rd	4th	5th	6th	
Harding	4	2	—	—	—	—	34
Arkansas Tech	2	3	1	—	—	—	31
Henderson State	1	2	3	—	—	—	28
Arkansas-Monticello	—	—	1	2	3	—	16
Christian Brothers	—	—	1	1	2	2	13
Southern Arkansas	—	—	—	3	1	2	13
Ouachita Baptist	—	—	1	1	1	3	12

Overall Champion: West Florida (9), Harding (2), North Alabama (2)

2008 PRE-SEASON ALL-GSC TEAM

The 2008 Pre-Season All-GSC Volleyball Team is a collection of the best talent returning to the hardcourt this year. This year's squad is a veteran bunch with all 17 members upperclassmen at their respective institutions. 10 First Team selections from a year ago, highlighted by Eastern Division Player of the Year Luciana Rapach (West Florida). **Arkansas Tech and Harding** had the most players selected, with three apiece representing both the Golden Suns and Lady Bisons. **North Alabama, West Alabama, West Florida and West Georgia** all had two. Montevallo, Christian Brothers and Henderson State each had a player chosen.

As mentioned earlier, UWF right side player **Rapach** is the headliner of the East squad. Rapach pushed her team to an NCAA berth en route to being named as the East Division's top player. She is joined by 2007 first team selections **Jessica Hansen (UNA), Whitney Sanders (UNA), Allison Nail (UWA), Madeline Gonzalez (UWF) and Andressa Martins (UWG)**.

In the West five seniors anchor the team, including 2007 First Team All-GSC selections **Kayla Allison (ATU) and Leah Tepe (HU)**. Also coming back from last year's First Team are **Manuela Nesheva (HU) and Bethany Wright (HSU)**.

EAST DIVISION

POS	NAME	SCHOOL	HT	YEAR	HOMETOWN
MH	Monika Tortorici	Montevallo	6-0	Sr.	Birmingham, Ala.
L	#Jessica Hansen	North Alabama	5-5	Sr.	Council Bluffs, Iowa
OH	#Whitney Sanders	North Alabama	6-1	Sr.	Haleyville, Ala.
OH	#Allison Nail	West Alabama	5-10	Sr.	Cullman, Ala.
OH	\$Ana Gabriela Pedrosa	West Alabama	6-0	Jr.	Belo Horizonte, Brazil
S	#Madeline Gonzalez	West Florida	5-7	Sr.	Bayamon, Puerto Rico
RS	#Luciana Rapach	West Florida	5-9	Sr.	Porte Alegre, Brazil
MB	Amber Barnlund	West Georgia	6-1	Sr.	Bourbonnais, Ill.
OH	#Andressa Martins	West Georgia	5-10	Jr.	Olinda, Brazil

WEST DIVISION

POS	NAME	SCHOOL	HT	YEAR	HOMETOWN
S	#Kayla Allison	Arkansas Tech	6-0	Sr.	Tulsa, Okla.
MB	\$Dana Florian	Arkansas Tech	5-11	Jr.	Wilmington, Ill.
OH	\$Racheal Urquhart	Arkansas Tech	5-11	Sr.	Chatham, Ontario
MB	Aubrey Pancratz	Christian Brothers	6-0	Sr.	Chandler, Ariz.
OH	#Manuela Nesheva	Harding	5-7	Jr.	Lukovit, Bulgaria
MB	\$Shellie Rummer	Harding	5-9	Sr.	Utica, Ohio
S	#Leah Tape	Harding	5-7	Sr.	Germantown, Tenn.
L	#Bethany Wright	Henderson State	5-7	Jr.	Georgetown, Texas

#—2007 First Team All-GSC

\$—2007 Second Team All-GSC

GSC VOLLEYBALL MATCH OF THE WEEK

For the second straight season in the sport of volleyball, the Gulf South Conference will feature a "Match of the Week" in 2008. The GSC will highlight teams around the conference throughout the volleyball season, spotlighting one match per week. The release will take a look at the history of the matchup, along with quotes from coaches and player profiles.

Tentatively set to kick off once the conference slate begins, every team will appear at least once during the year. This will show the strength of the GSC, recognizing a league that sports impressive volleyball history.

GSC volleyball has been a major player nationally, making 23 appearances in the NCAA Tournament. The conference also boasts a national championship (North Alabama, 2003) and a .521 winning percentage (24-22) in postseason play. The Gulf South Conference has had as many as three teams chosen to compete in regional action in one year, and has been represented in 12 straight seasons of postseason action (1996-2007). GSC Tournament Champions West Georgia and East Division leader West Florida made the NCAA field in 2007.

"The GSC Volleyball Match of the Week has brought attention from the local media into the sport," said Commissioner Nate Salant. "It has also focused fan and institution support onto volleyball, and we feel it will have an even greater impact this season."

2008 TOP NEWCOMERS

EAST DIVISION

POS	NAME	SCHOOL	HT	YEAR	LAST SCHOOL/HOMETOWN
S	Dimery Michaels	Alabama-Huntsville	5-8	Fr.	Samuel Clemens HS/Schertz, Texas
OH	Jessica Ruple	Alabama-Huntsville	5-8	Fr.	Sandy Springs HS/Tyrone, Ga.
S	Anna Garrison	Montevallo	5-4	Fr.	LaVergne HS/LaVergne, Tenn.
S	Rachel Wotitzky	Montevallo	5-4	Fr.	Charlotte HS/Punta Gorda, Fla.
MB	Chelsea Logan	Valdosta State	6-0	Fr.	Dakota Ridge HS/Littleton, Colo.
S	Lea Weber	Valdosta State	5-9	Fr.	J.W. Mitchell HS/Trinity, Fla.
MB	Jordan Kent	West Alabama	6-0	Jr.	Northwest Shoals CC/Decatur, Ala.
L	Chanelle Esteban	West Alabama	5-5	Jr.	College of Southern Idaho/Hawaii Kai, Hawaii
MH	Patricia Gandolfo	West Florida	6-3	Jr.	Missouri-West Plains/Porto Alegre, Brazil
MH	Morgan Elyea	West Florida	6-0	So.	Northern Kentucky/New Castle, Ind.
S	Kelli Johnson	West Georgia	5-9	Jr.	St. Petersburg College/Sopchoppy, Fla.
MB	Casey Niles	West Georgia	6-2	Fr.	Westosha HS/Bristol, Wis.

WEST DIVISION

POS	NAME	SCHOOL	HT	YEAR	LAST SCHOOL/HOMETOWN
OH	Jalynn Thornton	Arkansas-Monticello	6-1	Jr.	Dixie State/Pleasant Grove, Utah
MB	Mallory Storm	Arkansas-Monticello	5-11	Jr.	Southwestern Illinois/Collinsville, Ill.
OH	Brennae Benda	Arkansas Tech	5-9	Fr.	Woodstock HS/Woodstock, Ill.
OH	Marcella Mascarenhas	Arkansas Tech	5-9	Fr.	Arbos Colegio/Sao Paulo, Brazil
S	Whitney Weyhrich	Christian Brothers	6-0	Fr.	North Star HS/Lincoln, Neb.
OH	Kelly Nolan	Christian Brothers	5-11	Fr.	Rosati-Kain HS/St. Louis, Mo.
OH	Savannah Smith	Harding	5-8	Fr.	Mansfield HS/Mansfield, Texas
MB	Alex Smith	Harding	5-8	Fr.	Heritage Christian HS/Carmel, Ind.
MB	Laura Ochoa	Henderson State	6-0	Fr.	Rivera HS/Brownsville, Texas
OH	Tatiana Kuhn	Henderson State	6-1	Jr.	Tyler JC/Esteio, Brazil
RS	Libby Merritt	Ouachita Baptist	5-8	Fr.	Conway Christian HS/Conway, Ark.
S	Lexie Hegi	Ouachita Baptist	5-9	Fr.	Fort Worth Paschal/Fort Worth, Texas
S	Michaela Scroggins	Southern Arkansas	5-7	So.	Manatee CC/The Colony, Texas
OH	Danielle Sneed	Southern Arkansas	5-6	Jr.	Brook Haven CC/Duncanville, Texas

2008 GSC VOLLEYBALL TOURNAMENT

(at East Division Champion)

The top four teams in each Division will qualify for the GSC Volleyball Championship Tournament and be seeded according to their standing. This if not a final bracket.

Friday, November 14

First Round

Match 1	TBA	West #1 Seed v. East #4 Seed
Match 2	TBA	West #3 Seed v. East #2 Seed
Match 3	TBA	West #4 Seed v. East #1 Seed
Match 4	TBA	West #2 Seed v. East #3 Seed

Saturday, November 15

Semifinals

Match 5	TBA	Match 1 Winner v. Match 2 Winner
Match 6	TBA	Match 3 Winner v. Match 4 Winner

Final

Match 7	TBA	Match 5 Winner v. Match 6 Winner
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* All times are Central and subject to change