



CONFERENCE USA

5201 N. O'Connor Blvd. Suite 300 Irving, TX 75039 P (214) 774-1300 F (214) 496-0055

Website // conferenceusa.com

Twitter // @ConferenceUSA

Watch // www.CUSA.tv

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Contact: Morgan Sthele (msthele@c-usa.org)

C-USA PRESEASON MEN'S SOCCER TEAM & POLL ANNOUNCED

IRVING, Texas – Last year's men's soccer regular-season champion Charlotte has been selected by the league's nine head coaches as the 2017 Conference USA preseason favorite. FIU junior forward **Santiago Patino** was voted the C-USA Preseason Offensive Player of the year, and Charlotte redshirt sophomore goalkeeper **Elliot Panicco** was selected as the C-USA Preseason Defensive Player of the Year.

Since re-joining C-USA in 2013, Charlotte has made four NCAA Tournament appearances, been two-time regular season champions, and won the 2013 C-USA Championship. Last season, the 49ers lost one conference game, giving them an .875 winning percentage in league play. Fresh off winning C-USA Freshman of the Year, Panicco is representing Charlotte on this year's preseason squad. Last season, Panicco recorded a program-record 10 shutouts which ranked 13th in the nation.

FIU has three players on this year's preseason squad, with Patino leading the pack. In his sophomore season Patino was awarded C-USA All-Conference first team honors and appeared in 17 games with eight goals and one assist. Senior defender **Paul Marie** and sophomore midfielder **Joris Ahlinvi** join Patino on the 2017 preseason team, both making the 2016 C-USA All-Tournament Team last season. Marie appeared in 16 games, totaling 1,066 minutes for the season. Ahlinvi had 12 starts and scored 10 points for the year, making the C-USA All-Freshman Team.

The top seven teams at the conclusion of the regular season earn a spot in the 2017 Conference USA Championship, hosted by Old Dominion Nov. 8-12. The league's 23rd season kicks off Friday, Aug. 25.

2017 C-USA Men's Soccer Preseason Team

^Elliot Panicco, Charlotte, R-So., GK
*Santiago Patino, FIU, Jr., F
Paul Marie, FIU, Sr., D
Bjorn, Gudjonsson, South Carolina, Jr., F
David Valverde, UAB, Sr., MF
Julian Veen Uldal, South Carolina, So., MF
Alex Bumpus, Kentucky, Sr., D
Peyton Ericson, South Carolina, Jr., MF/D
Joris Ahlinvi, FIU, So., MF
Niko Klosterhalfen, ODU, Jr., MF
Tom Smart, New Mexico, R-So., D
Matthew Constant, New Mexico, So., D
*Preseason Offensive Player of the Year
^Preseason Defensive Player of the Year

2017 C-USA Men's Soccer Preseason Poll

(First-Place Votes)
1. Charlotte (4)
2. New Mexico (2)
3. FIU (2)
4. Kentucky
5. South Carolina
6. UAB (1)
7. Old Dominion
8. Marshall
9. Florida Atlantic