



# PAC-12 CONFERENCE

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## 2019-20 PAC-12 MEN'S BASKETBALL ALL-CONFERENCE AWARDS ANNOUNCED

**OREGON'S PAYTON PRITCHARD SELECTED MEN'S BASKETBALL PLAYER OF THE YEAR;  
ARIZONA'S ZEKE NNAJI NAMED FRESHMAN OF THE YEAR;  
COLORADO'S TYLER BEY VOTED DEFENSIVE PLAYER OF THE YEAR;  
UCLA'S CHRIS SMITH EARNS MOST IMPROVED PLAYER OF THE YEAR;  
ARIZONA STATE'S ALONZO VERGE JR. TABBED SIXTH MAN OF THE YEAR;  
UCLA'S MICK CRONIN CHOSEN JOHN R. WOODEN COACH OF THE YEAR**

**SAN FRANCISCO** – In a vote of the 12 Conference coaches, OREGON's **Payton Pritchard** has been chosen the 2019-20 Pac-12 Men's Basketball Player of the Year; ARIZONA's **Zeke Nnaji** was voted the Pac-12 Freshman of the Year; COLORADO's **Tyler Bey** was selected the Pac-12 Defensive Player of the Year; UCLA's **Chris Smith** was tabbed the Pac-12 Most Improved Player of the Year; ARIZONA STATE's **Alonzo Verge Jr.** earned the Pac-12 Sixth Man of the Year; and UCLA's **Mick Cronin** claimed the John R. Wooden Pac-12 Coach of the Year honor, Commissioner Larry Scott announced today along with the league's All-Conference Teams.

The Conference matched its record with six teams reaching the 20-win plateau during the regular season, and with as many as seven teams in contention for NCAA Tournament at-large berths the stage is now set for one of the most exciting Pac-12 Tournaments in league history.

The Pac-12 Men's Basketball Tournament is set to take place March 11-14 in Las Vegas at T-Mobile Arena. All-tournament and flex passes and single-session tickets are available for purchase at [pac-12.com/tickets](http://pac-12.com/tickets) and fans can follow coverage of the event all week long at [pac-12.com/menstourney](http://pac-12.com/menstourney).

### **PAC-12 PLAYER OF THE YEAR: Payton Pritchard, Sr., G, OREGON**

A finalist for the Wooden and Cousy Awards and Naismith and Robertson Trophies for National Player of the Year, Pritchard was the engine that propelled the Ducks to their third Pac-12 regular-season title in the past five seasons including the second of his sterling four-year career.

The 6-2 lead guard from West Linn, Ore., becomes the sixth Conference Player of the Year for Oregon, including the third in the past six seasons. He is also the first senior and point guard to claim the league's top honor since former Duck Joseph Young in 2014-15.

He closed the regular season leading the league in both scoring (20.5 ppg) and assists (5.6 apg) – the three previous players to do that for a full season also won the Conference's Player of the Year honor and were consensus First Team All-Americans (Gary Payton, OSU 1989-90; Damon Stoudamire, ARIZ 1994-95; Jason Terry, ARIZ 1998-99). Payton and Terry also went on to earn National Player of the Year recognition.

Add in his 4.3 rebounds per game and Pritchard is the only major conference player and just 1-of-3 nationally averaging at least 20 points, five assists and four rebounds per College Basketball Reference. He also ranks second nationally in College Basketball Reference's Offensive Win Shares (5.3) and Offensive Box Plus-Minus (10.0).

## **PAC-12 FRESHMAN OF THE YEAR: Zeke Nnaji, F, ARIZONA**

A member of the top-10 watch list for the Karl Malone Award given to the nation's best power forward, Nnaji is the 10th Freshman of the Year recipient from Arizona including the eighth freshman forward to win the honor for the Wildcats.

The Hopkins, Minn., native is averaging team bests of 16.3 points on 57.3 percent shooting and 8.6 rebounds, all of which rank top three among the Pac-12's loaded freshmen class and top eight among NCAA Division I rookies. He is also pacing the Conference with 14 double-doubles, the third most nationally for a freshman.

## **PAC-12 DEFENSIVE PLAYER OF THE YEAR: Tyler Bey, Jr., G/F, COLORADO**

Bey, a member of the midseason top 15 for the Naismith Trophy Defensive Player of the Year, leads the league in rebounding (9.0 rpg), ranks fifth in steals (1.53 spg) and is tied for sixth in blocked shots (1.2 bpg) – the only Conference player ranked in the top 15 of each category. Per College Basketball Reference, the 6-7 guard/forward from Las Vegas, Nev., ranks in the top 10 nationally and third among major conference players in Defensive Rating (8th, 85.0).

Last year's Pac-12 Most Improved Player now joins forward André Roberson as former Buffs to win the Pac-12's Defensive Player of the Year award.

## **PAC-12 MOST IMPROVED PLAYER OF THE YEAR: Chris Smith, Jr., F, UCLA**

The leading scorer (13.1 ppg) for league runner-up UCLA, Smith more than doubled his scoring average from a season ago (6.3 ppg in 2018-19) while setting single-season career bests in rebounding (5.4 rpg), assists (1.6 apg), steals (1.0 spg) and every shooting category (45.8% FG, 34.1% 3FG, 84.0% FT).

After averaging 11.1 points as the team went 7-6 in non-conference play, the Bruins' season turned on the improved performance of Smith, who averaged 14.6 points on 46.8 percent shooting and 6.1 rebounds in Conference action.

Smith is the first UCLA recipient of the league's Most Improved Player award which debuted following the 2008-09 season.

## **PAC-12 SIXTH MAN OF THE YEAR: Alonzo Verge Jr., Jr., G, ARIZONA STATE**

Like backcourt teammate and Pac-12 co-Sixth Man of the Year Remy Martin two seasons ago, Verge Jr. proved to be the league's most potent offensive weapon off the bench. The only reserve to rank among the league leaders in scoring (14th, 14.6 ppg), he averaged an NCAA Division I-leading 16.8 points in 19 games off the bench compared to 9.9 points per game in nine starting assignments for the Sun Devils. To be eligible, players must not exceed more than one-third starts in league games.

## **JOHN R. WOODEN PAC-12 COACH OF THE YEAR: Mick Cronin, UCLA**

Utilizing a 10-player rotation consisting of seven underclassmen, first-year UCLA head coach Cronin defied most expectations as he led the Bruins – who were picked eighth in the preseason media poll – back from a 7-6 non-conference mark and 1-3 league start to a runner-up finish in the Pac-12 standings just a game behind predicted champion Oregon. The six-spot betterment equals the fourth-best since the league began conducting preseason polls in 1984-85 (WSU +8 2006-07, ASU +7 1992-93, ARIZ +7 1985-86).

Cronin, who is one victory away from his 10th consecutive 20-win season, is the seventh Conference coach to win the honor in his first year with a program, joining Stanford's Dick DiBiasi (1976), UCLA's Gary Cunningham (1978), Oregon State's Jim Anderson (1990), California's Ben Braun (1997), Washington State's Tony Bennett (2007) and Washington's Mike Hopkins (2018).

It is Cronin's third career conference Coach of the Year award along with the Ohio Valley in 2006 and The American in 2014.

**THE VOTE:** Coach of the Year, All-Conference, All-Freshman and All-Defensive Teams, and Most Improved Player and Sixth Man of the Year are voted on by the coaches. Coaches are not permitted to vote for themselves or their own players for the honors.

The complete All-Conference Teams:

## **ALL-PAC-12 TEAM**

### **FIRST TEAM**

<b>Name</b>	<b>School</b>	<b>Pos</b>	<b>Yr</b>	<b>Ht</b>	<b>Wt</b>	<b>Hometown (Last School)</b>
Oscar da Silva	STAN	F	Jr.	6-9	225	Munich, Germany (Ludwig Gymnasium)
CJ Elleby	WSU	F	So.	6-6	200	Seattle, Wash. (Cleveland HS)
Remy Martin	ASU	G	Jr.	6-0	170	Chatsworth, Calif. (Sierra Canyon HS)
Zeke Nnaji	ARIZ	F	Fr.	6-11	240	Hopkins, Minn. (Hopkins HS)
Onyeka Okongwu	USC	F	Fr.	6-9	245	Chino, Calif. (Chino Hills HS)
Payton Pritchard	ORE	G	Sr.	6-2	195	West Linn, Ore. (West Linn HS)
Chris Smith	UCLA	G	Jr.	6-9	215	Chicago, Ill. (Huntington Prep (W.Va.))
Isaiah Stewart	WASH	F	Fr.	6-9	240	Rochester, N.Y. (La Lumiere School (Ind.))
Tres Tinkle***	OSU	F	Sr.	6-7	225	Missoula, Mont. (Hellgate HS)
McKinley Wright IV**	COLO	G	Jr.	6-0	195	North Robbinsdale, Minn. (Champlin Park)

### **SECOND TEAM**

<b>Name</b>	<b>School</b>	<b>Pos</b>	<b>Yr</b>	<b>Ht</b>	<b>Wt</b>	<b>Hometown (Last School)</b>
Timmy Allen	UTAH	F	So.	6-6	205	Mesa, Ariz. (Red Mountain HS)
Tyler Bey	COLO	G/F	Jr.	6-7	218	Las Vegas, Nev. (Middlebrooks Academy (Calif.))
Matt Bradley	CAL	G	So.	6-4	220	San Bernardino, Calif. (Wasatch Academy (Utah))
Nico Mannion	ARIZ	G	Fr.	6-3	190	Siena, Italy (Pinnacle HS (Ariz.))
Jonah Mathews	USC	G	Sr.	6-3	205	Santa Monica, Calif. (Santa Monica HS)

**Honorable Mention (receiving at least three votes):** Chris Duarte (ORE, G), Tyrell Terry (STAN, G), Alonzo Verge Jr. (ASU, G).

\*\*\* three-time All-Pac-12 First Team honoree; \*\* two-time All-Pac-12 First Team honoree

### **PAC-12 ALL-FRESHMAN TEAM**

<b>Name</b>	<b>School</b>	<b>Pos</b>	<b>Ht</b>	<b>Wt</b>	<b>Hometown (Last School)</b>
Nico Mannion	ARIZ	G	6-3	190	Siena, Italy (Pinnacle HS (Ariz.))
Zeke Nnaji	ARIZ	F	6-11	240	Hopkins, Minn. (Hopkins HS)
Onyeka Okongwu	USC	F	6-9	245	Chino, Calif. (Chino Hills HS)
Isaiah Stewart	WASH	F	6-9	240	Rochester, N.Y. (La Lumiere School (Ind.))
Tyrell Terry	STAN	G	6-1	160	Minneapolis, Minn. (DeLaSalle HS)

**Honorable Mention (receiving at least three votes):** Jaime Jaquez Jr. (UCLA, G).

### **PAC-12 ALL-DEFENSIVE TEAM**

<b>Name</b>	<b>School</b>	<b>Pos</b>	<b>Yr.</b>	<b>Ht</b>	<b>Wt</b>	<b>Hometown (Last School)</b>
Tyler Bey	COLO	G/F	Jr.	6-7	218	Las Vegas, Nev. (Middlebrooks Academy (Calif.))
Kylor Kelley**	OSU	F	Sr.	7-0	215	Gervais, Ore. (Lane Community College)
Jonah Mathews	USC	G	Sr.	6-3	205	Santa Monica, Calif. (Santa Monica HS)
Bryce Wills	STAN	G	So.	6-6	195	White Plains, N.Y. (Iona Preparatory School)
McKinley Wright IV	COLO	G	Jr.	6-0	195	North Robbinsdale, Minn. (Champlin Park)

**Honorable Mention (receiving at least three votes):** Chris Duarte (ORE, G), Jalen Hill (UCLA, F), Jervae Robinson (WSU, G), Dylan Smith (ARIZ, G).

\*\* two-time Pac-12 All-Defensive Team honoree

**PLAYER OF THE YEAR:** Payton Pritchard, Sr., G, OREGON

**FRESHMAN OF THE YEAR:** Zeke Nnaji, F, ARIZONA

**DEFENSIVE PLAYER OF THE YEAR:** Tyler Bey, Jr., G/F, COLORADO

**MOST IMPROVED PLAYER OF THE YEAR:** Chris Smith, Jr., G, UCLA

**SIXTH MAN OF THE YEAR:** Alonzo Verge Jr., Jr., G, ARIZONA STATE

**JOHN R. WOODEN COACH OF THE YEAR:** Mick Cronin, UCLA