

Mountain Pacific Sports Federation  
2020 MPSF Men's Water Polo  
Conference News  
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## STANFORD TOPS MPSF MEN'S WATER POLO COACHES' POLL

Stanford accumulated 24 points and four of the six first-place votes to win the 2020 MPSF Men's Water Polo Preseason Coaches' Poll. The Cardinal won their first NCAA Championship since 2002 last season, after repeating the MPSF title. Tyler Abramson is Stanford's leading returning scorer, producing an MPSF-high 98 points while trailing only two-time national player of the year teammate Ben Hallock with 63 goals in 2019. AJ Rossman (29) and Quinn Woodhead (27) are looking to build on 20-plus goal seasons while goalkeeper Andrew Chun was named an Honorable Mention All-American.

USC, which won the MPSF's regular season en route to the NCAA Semifinals in 2019, collected 20 points and one first-place vote to place second in the poll. The Trojans welcome back All-Americans and All-MPSF honorees Jacob Mercep (51 goals/32 assists/83 points), Hannes Daube (36 goals/27 assists/63 points), Jake Ehrhardt, and goalkeeper Nic Porter.

UCLA totaled 19 points with the final first-place vote to finish third in the poll. The Bruins return four of their top-five scorers and eight of their top-10 from 2019, including first team All-American and All-MPSF selection Felix Brozyna-Vilim (33 goals, 73 drawn exclusions). Also back are third team All-Americans Jake Cavano (team-high 42 goals) and Tommy Gruwell (26 goals/22 assists).

California picked up 13 points, as the Bears return 2019 MPSF Newcomer of the Year and All-American Nikolaos Papanikolaou, who was also the only freshman in the conference named to the All-MPSF First of Second Team. He compiled 61 points on 51 goals and 10 assists, along with 72 drawn exclusions, 23 steals and nine field blocks. Two-Meter all-conference Nikos Delgrammatikas is also back (15 goals/8 assists/23 points).

Penn State Behrend and Austin College rounded out the poll with seven points each. The Lions return one of their top scorers Colin Holmes along with top defender Jacob Harkins (27 steals), while the Kangaroos will be led by D-III All-Americans Andrew Pope, Will Koelzer, and Max Wade (50 goals).

First sprint to the 2020 MPSF campaign is scheduled for January 23, 2021. That date kicks-off the first of three regular season round-robin weekends, in which the Pac-12 schools will face one another multiple times without any non-conference play during the season. UCLA hosts the MPSF Championship Tournament, March 5-7, while Stanford will be the site of the NCAA Tournament, March 18-21. Since its inaugural season of 1992, the MPSF has captured all 28 national championships in men's water polo.

| <u>Rank</u> | <u>Team</u>        | <u>Points (First-Place)</u> | <u>2019 Team Record</u> | <u>2019 MPSF Finish/Postseason</u> |
|-------------|--------------------|-----------------------------|-------------------------|------------------------------------|
| 1           | Stanford           | 24 (4)                      | 21-2 Overall; 2-1 MPSF  | #2/MPSF & NCAA Champion            |
| 2           | USC                | 20 (1)                      | 15-6 Overall; 3-0 MPSF  | #1/NCAA Semifinal                  |
| 3           | UCLA               | 19 (1)                      | 17-5 Overall; 1-2 MPSF  | #3/MPSF Semifinal                  |
| 4           | California         | 13                          | 14-11 Overall; 0-3 MPSF | #4/MPSF Final                      |
| 5T          | Penn State Behrend | 7                           | 7-14 Overall            | #5                                 |
| 5T          | Austin College     | 7                           | 4-19 Overall            | #6                                 |