



US Lacrosse's WCLA Championships Begin Wednesday in Salt Lake City

By Paul Ohanian

SPARKS, Md. (May 5, 2017) — After a three-year run on the East Coast, the US Lacrosse Women's Collegiate Lacrosse Associates (WCLA) National Championship, now in its 17th year, has moved back across the Mississippi River and landed in Salt Lake City, with games beginning Wednesday at the Regional Athletic Complex (RAC).

The WCLA is comprised of 230 college club teams from coast-to-coast that compete under the US Lacrosse umbrella. From these, the most deserving Division I and Division II club teams qualify for the season-ending national championships, conducted by US Lacrosse each spring.

The 16-team Division I tournament begins on Wednesday, May 10, while the 12-team Division II tournament starts Thursday, May 11. The event concludes with championship games for both divisions on Saturday afternoon.

Three local teams qualified for this year's championship event. BYU (9-1) is the number eight seed in the Division I field and faces No. 9 Virginia (8-3) in Wednesday's opening round. Utah and Utah State both earned berths in the Division II tournament and begin play on Thursday.

"We had high hopes that this would be a good season for us after coming off a few rebuilding years and it has not disappointed," said BYU coach Nikki Dabrowski. "We pride ourselves in being part of a very difficult region."

Harrow Sports and Guardian, maker of The Pearl lacrosse ball, are the official event partners for the 2017 US Lacrosse WCLA National Championships. Fans are welcome to attend all games. Admission and parking at the multi-field RAC is free.

"We are thrilled to have the Women's Collegiate Lacrosse Associates Championship here in Salt Lake City. This event continues to build our brand as 'The State of Sport' and we welcome all the lacrosse players, coaches, and fans to Utah," said Jeff Robbins, president and CEO of the Utah Sports Commission.

The University of Pittsburgh earned the No. 1 seed in the Division I championship following a 14-1 regular season. The Panthers, who were national champions in 2014, are making their 11th overall appearance in the championship tournament and punched their ticket to SLC by winning the Women's Collegiate Lacrosse League (WCLL) title for the fourth time in five years. Pitt brings an eight-game winning streak into Wednesday's opening round game against No. 16 seed Western Washington.



Santa Clara (11-2) received the number two seed after winning the Western Women's Lacrosse League (WWLL) title. The Broncos are making their 13th overall and 10th straight tournament appearance, the longest active streak for appearances among this year's participants. Santa Clara faces No. 15 Texas A&M in the opening round.

"We think our well rounded schedule has prepared us for the national tournament," said Santa Clara coach Jessica Paige. "We have seen a mix of everything, both offensively and defensively."

Santa Clara's league rival, UCLA (12-2), is seeded third, and defending champion Georgia (13-3) is the number four seed. Georgia's coach, Adam Weinstein, serves as chair of the tournament's selection committee and indicated that the number of quality teams for nationals grows each year.

"This was, by far, the toughest call we've had in years to determine the seeding, but we strongly believe we have the most competitive field of teams at nationals to date," he said.

Ten of the 16 teams in this year's Division I field are returnees from last year's championship. The field also includes the past four national champions in No. 5 seed Colorado State (2013 champion), No. 1 seed Pittsburgh (2014), No. 11 seed Michigan (2015) and No. 4 Georgia (2016).

"I think anything is possible with this field. Everyone steps it up a few levels at the nationals and the team that wants it more will get it done," said David McKinnon, coach at Michigan.

In the 12-team Division II bracket, defending champion University of Denver earned the top seed for the second straight year and brings a 10-2 overall record into the tournament. The Pioneers are making their fourth straight and fifth overall appearance in the championship.

Grand Canyon (12-0), one of just two undefeated teams, is the number two seed, with Loyola (Md.) University receiving the number three seed.

Three schools are first-timer qualifiers for the Division II championship, which began in 2010. They are No. 7 seed Providence, No. 8 Grand Valley State, and No. 12 Washington State.

The Division I and Division II formats are slightly different due to the variance in the number of teams. The Division I format calls for a traditional single-elimination bracket to determine the champion. Following each team's first loss, it moves into the consolation bracket to determine its final placement.



WCLA Division I First Round Games – Wednesday, May 10

- 11 am – No. 1 Pittsburgh (14-1) vs. No. 16 Western Washington (13-1)
- 11 am – No. 8 Brigham Young (9-1) vs. No. 9 Virginia (11-3)
- 11 am – No. 5 Colorado State (12-4) vs. No. 12 Cal Poly (7-7)
- 11 am – No. 4 Georgia (13-3) vs. No. 13 San Diego State (11-4)
- 2 pm – No. 3 UCLA (12-2) vs. No. 14 North Carolina (8-3)
- 2 pm – No. 6 Boston College (13-1) vs. No. 11 Michigan (9-4)
- 2 pm – No. 7 Delaware (9-2) vs. No. 10 Virginia Tech (8-3)
- 2 pm – No. 2 Santa Clara (11-2) vs. No. 15 Texas A&M (7-3)

In Division II, the teams are arranged into four pods of three teams each. A round-robin within each pod determines the qualifier that advances into the semifinal round. Single-elimination is utilized in the semifinals and final.

WCLA Division II Pool Play Groupings – Thursday, May 11

- Pool A – No. 1 Denver (10-2), No. 8 Grand Valley State (11-2), No.12 Washington State (9-2)
- Pool B – No. 2 Grand Canyon (12-0), No. 7 Providence (10-3), No. 11 Utah State (6-5)
- Pool C – No. 3 Loyola (9-2), No. 6 Utah (7-2), No. 10 St. Benedict (9-3)
- Pool D – No. 4 Concordia (12-2), No. 5 Vermont (7-0), No. 9 St. Thomas (10-2)

Both the D-I and D-II championship games on Saturday, May 13 will be available for viewing via free streaming from www.CoachesAid.com.

LaxMagazine.com, an official website of US Lacrosse, will have complete coverage of the championships – including live blogs, stories and scores, updated game schedules, brackets and photo galleries. Additional WCLA information is available at www.wcla.us.

About US Lacrosse

US Lacrosse is the national governing body of lacrosse and the home of the nation's fastest-growing sport. Through responsive and effective leadership, US Lacrosse provides programs and services to inspire participation while protecting the integrity of the sport. Bookmark, like and follow US Lacrosse at uslacrosse.org, fb.com/uslacrosse and [@uslacrosse](https://twitter.com/uslacrosse), respectively.

Call for Volunteers

US Lacrosse is looking for capable and enthusiastic volunteers (ages 16 and older) in the Salt Lake City area to help make the 2017 event a success. Specifically, we need scorer's table assistants who will help track game scores and maintain game clocks. If interested, please reply here: www.signupgenius.com/go/30e094ea8ae2daafc1-volunteer



Media Contact

Paul Ohanian

Marketing Manager

US Lacrosse

gpohanian@uslacrosse.org

410-235-6882 # 154

301-503-9788 (mobile)