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NOTRE DAME WOMEN'S SOCCER RANKED SIXTH IN *SOCCER AMERICA* PRESEASON POLL
Irish soccer programs among the best combinations in the nation, with ND men ranked third in *SA* poll.

The Notre Dame women's soccer team continues to receive significant recognition in the national polls, with *Soccer America* magazine placing the Irish sixth in its preseason rankings. The NSCAA coaches poll earlier listed the Notre Dame women 10th while the *Soccer Buzz* women's soccer internet site matches *SA* by placing the Irish sixth in its preseason poll.

Alumni Field could provide some of the nation's top all-around soccer talent in 2003, with the Notre Dame men checking in at third in the *SA* preseason poll. West-coast powers UCLA (1st in men, 3rd in women) and Stanford (6th men, 2nd women) joined Notre Dame as the nation's top soccer schools for 2003, based on combined men's and women's rankings in the *SA* poll.

Eight of the Notre Dame women's 2003 opponents have received mention in one of the above three polls, including six in the *SA* rankings: Stanford (2nd), Santa Clara (4th), West Virginia (11th), Arizona State (14th), Connecticut (15th) and Villanova (22nd). Michigan was 17th in the coaches poll, which also listed Rutgers among four teams receiving votes but just outside the top 25.

The BIG EAST led all conferences with four teams (ND, WVU, UConn and Villanova) in the *Soccer America* preseason poll.

SCU – which plays host to ND on Sept. 21 (look for that game, and the Sept. 19 Stanford game, like on CSTV) – is ranked first by both the coaches and *SB* polls while UConn has a top preseason ranking of 8th in the coaches poll. Others ranked higher than in the *SA* poll include WVU (8th in *SB*) and ASU (11th in *SB*).

Soccer Buzz forecasts a challenging slate for the Irish in 2003, led by four teams (SCU, Stanford, WVU and ASU) in the top 11 spots of its preseason poll.

The *Soccer America* preseason top 10 includes North Carolina, Stanford, UCLA, SCU, Texas, ND, Portland, Penn State, Virginia and Pepperdine. *SA* earlier listed ND's group of 10 newcomers as the nation's fifth-best incoming class.

The Irish return 12 of their top 13 players from the 2002 roster (all but graduated defensive midfielder Ashley Dryer), with the returners including several who missed large chunks of '02 (64 total combined games) due to injury. The '02 squad overcame the series of injuries by mounting a late-season run that ended in an NCAA Tournament third-round loss at top-ranked Stanford, with the Cardinal scoring in the 81st minute for the 1-0 win.

A six-member senior class and junior All-America right back **Candace Chapman** lead the veteran core for the 2003 Irish squad. Senior frontrunners **Amanda Guertin** and **Amy Warner** could emerge as one of the nation's top goal-scoring tandems while their fellow senior **Randi Scheller** is the leader of a deep midfield unit that also includes her classmate **Kimberly Carpenter** (Scheller's status is on hold pending a nagging hip injury).

Fifth-year player **Vanessa Pruzinsky** – coming off a 2002-03 school year that saw her sidelined with an ankle injury before becoming the third Notre Dame chemical engineering major ever to graduate with a 4.0 cumulative GPA – is nearing a return to action and could be used at central defender, outside back or even in a defensive midfielder role.

Chapman – who will miss some of the 2003 season while playing in the World Cup – combines with fellow Canadian **Melissa Tancredi** to form the backbone of the Irish defense, with Tancredi having the option of applying for a fifth year of eligibility in 2004.

Other top returners include sophomore goalkeeper **Erika Bohn**, versatile junior **Mary Boland**, junior defender **Gudrun Gunnarsdottir**, sophomore forward **Katie Thorlakson** (who just wrapped up play at the Pan Am Games with Canada's Under-19 National Team) and sophomore midfielder **Annie Scheffter** – who missed all of the 2002 season with an ACL knee injury before making an impressive return last spring.

Three members of the freshman class – U.S. Under-19 National Team member **Jen Buczkowski**, **Christie Shaner** and **Lizzie Reed** – received high school All-America honors and each recently was part of a noteworthy winning team.

Buczkowski combined with fellow Notre Dame freshmen **Kim Lorenzen** and **Jill Krivacek** on the Illinois team that won the 2003 Olympic Development Program national title (with a 1-0 win over Reed and her New Jersey team).

Two other members of the freshman class – defender **Kari Kennedy** and defensive midfielder **Claire Gallerano** – helped lead the Dallas Texans to the under-18 national club championship (shortly before reporting to Notre Dame) while defender **Christie Shaner's** FC Bucks Challenge (Pa.) team reached the under-19 semifinals and narrowly missed a spot in the title game.

Check back to und.com later in the preseason for a feature story on the Notre Dame freshmen.

See pp. 2-3 for complete preseason polls (also available via PDF link on www.und.com).

Soccer America College Women's Preseason Top 25

Team (2002 record)	Final '02 ranking
1. North Carolina (21-2-4)	2
2. <i>Stanford (21-2-0)</i>	1
3. UCLA (18-4-0)	3
4. <i>Santa Clara (20-5-1)</i>	4
5. Texas (15-5-1)	11
6. NOTRE DAME (13-8-0)	NR
7. Portland (20-4-2)	7
8. Penn State (19-4-1)	13
9. Virginia (13-7-2)	24
10. Pepperdine (18-2-2)	5
11. <i>West Virginia (18-3-1)</i>	8
12. Tennessee (18-6-1)	12
13. Florida State (13-7-3)	NR
14. <i>Arizona State (12-7-3)</i>	25
15. <i>Connecticut (21-3-1)</i>	6
16. California (12-8-1)	18
17. Texas A&M (20-5-1)	9
18. Maryland (13-8-2)	19
19. Clemson (14-8-0)	14
20. Nebraska (16-6-3)	10
21. USC (11-8-3)	NR
22. <i>Villanova (14-3-4)</i>	20
23. Auburn (15-5-2)	NR
24. Duke (9-9-2)	21
25. Charlotte (16-2-2)	23

Italics indicate Notre Dame 2003 opponents

NSCAA/adidas NCAA Division I Women – 2003 Preseason Rankings

	'02 Record	Final '02 Rank
1. <i>Santa Clara</i>	<i>20-5-1</i>	2
2. North Carolina	21-2-4	3
Portland	20-4-2	1
4. <i>Stanford</i>	<i>21-2-0</i>	5
5. UCLA	18-4-0	7
6. Texas A&M	20-5-1	6
7. Penn State	19-4-1	4
8. <i>Connecticut</i>	<i>21-3-1</i>	8
9. Texas	15-5-1	14
10. NOTRE DAME	13-8-0	15
11. Virginia	13-7-2	17
12. Nebraska	16-6-3	13
13. Pepperdine	18-2-2	9
14. Tennessee	18-6-1	10
15. Florida State	13-7-3	19
16. California	12-8-1	18
17. <i>Michigan</i>	<i>16-6-2</i>	11
18. <i>West Virginia</i>	<i>18-3-1</i>	12
19. Southern California	11-8-3	22
20. Clemson	14-7-0	25
21. Florida	10-10-2	NR
22. Southern Methodist	13-6-4	20
23. Maryland	13-8-1	24
24. Brigham Young	16-6-0	23
25. Purdue	14-5-3	21

Also receiving votes: *Arizona State*, Richmond, Charlotte, Indiana, *Rutgers*

Italics indicate Notre Dame 2003 opponents

Soccer Buzz 2003 Preseason Division I Women's Soccer Rankings

Rank	School	2002 Record	Final 2002 Rank
1.	<i>Santa Clara</i>	20-5-1	3
2.	North Carolina	21-2-4	4
3.	<i>Stanford</i>	21-2	2
4.	Texas	15-5-1	17
5.	Portland	20-4-2	1
6.	NOTRE DAME	13-8	16
7.	UCLA	18-4	8
8.	<i>West Virginia</i>	18-3-1	12
9.	Penn State	19-4-1	5
10.	Virginia	13-7-2	15
11.	<i>Arizona State</i>	12-7-2	ARV
12.	Florida State	13-7-3	14
13.	Tennessee	18-6-1	10
14.	Maryland	13-8-1	19
15.	Pepperdine	18-2-2	7
16.	Texas A&M	20-5-1	9
17.	Auburn	15-5-2	ARV
18.	Clemson	14-8	21
19.	<i>Connecticut</i>	21-3-1	6
20.	Nebraska	16-6-3	11
21.	USC	11-8-3	ARV
22.	California	12-8-1	22
23.	<i>Villanova</i>	14-3-4	ARV
24.	Duke	9-9-2	NR
25.	Indiana	10-7-2	NR

Also receiving votes (alph. order): BYU (16-6), Charlotte (16-2-2), Florida (10-10-2), Mississippi (13-5-2), Richmond (15-6-2), SMU (13-6-4)

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