

GREAT NORTHWEST ATHLETIC CONFERENCE

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Puga, Charles GNAC Scholar-Athlete Award Winners

SPOKANE, Wash. – Ashley Puga of Northwest Nazarene and Sam Charles of Montana State Billings have been selected the 2008-09 Great Northwest Athletic Conference Male and Female Scholar-Athletes of the Year.

Puga (Sr., Meridian, ID – Nampa Christian) is a nine-time NCAA Division II All-American and a two-time national champion and is the most decorated track and field athlete in Northwest Nazarene history.

She won NCAA Indoor and Outdoor national titles in the 800 meters this past season, setting a GNAC outdoor record with a season best time of 2:05.23. That time is the sixth fastest in NCAA Division II history.

Puga, who placed eighth in the 1500 meters in addition to winning the 800 at the outdoor national meet, was also selected the GNAC and the USTFCCCA Outdoor National Track Athlete of the Year. She set school records this spring in the 400, 800 and 1500 and now holds nine individual or relay NNU track records.

In indoor track and field, she won conference titles in the 800 and mile and led her team to a win in the 4x400 relay in earning GNAC Outstanding Performer honors at the conference meet. In cross country, she placed sixth in the conference meet and 16th in the NCAA West Region meet.

In the classroom, she posted a 3.95 grade point average graduating with a bachelor's degree in business administration and finance. A member of the Dean's List for all eight semesters of her collegiate career, she was a three-time GNAC Cross Country and Track & Field all-academic selection. She was also a three-time selection to the USTFCCCA All-Academic team.

Charles (Jr., Chiswell, England - Budmouth Tech) is on pace to become the most prolific scorer in GNAC men's soccer history. In two seasons since MSUB joined the GNAC, Charles has scored 38 goals and 85 points and has career totals of 45 goals and 101 points.

He has led the GNAC in scoring the past two seasons, including last fall when he scored 19 goals and had six assists in earning Daktronics honorable mention All-American honors.

In the classroom, the health and human performance major has compiled a 3.60 grade point average and was a second team CoSIDA/ESPN The Magazine Academic All-American selection this past fall.

"Sam's quality on the soccer field is only matched by his dedication and hard work in the classroom," MSUB coach Dan McNally said. "This is a very prestigious award for Sam and I'm proud of all the success he has achieved over the last three years."

GNAC Scholar-Athletes-of-the-Year

Years Male

2001-02 Erik Totten, Western Washington (Football)
2002-03 Tobias Schwoerer, Alaska Anchorage (Cross Country)
2003-04 Rob White, Western Washington (Football)
2004-05 Nathan Carlson, Saint Martin's (Cross County & Track)
2005-06 *Tony Binetti, Seattle Pacific (Basketball)
2006-07 *Adam Jensen, Seattle (Soccer)
2007-08 *Keith Lemay, Western Washington (Cross Country & Track)
Jarred Rensvold, Montana State Billings (Cross Country & Track)
2008-09 Sam Charles, Montana State Billings (Soccer)

Female

Nichole Sauvageau, Seattle (Soccer)
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Liz Bishop, Western Washington (Volleyball)
Martina Kartikova, Saint Martin's (Basketball)
Lindy Mullen, Central Washington (Track & Field)
*Ana Gutierrez, Seattle (Soccer)
Amanda Peters, Northwest Nazarene (Soccer & Track and Field)
*Ashley Puga, Northwest Nazarene (Cross Country & Track and Field)

*Conference Commissioners Regional winner. +National Award Winner