



CONFERENCE USA

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2017-18 C-USA SPRING SPIRIT OF SERVICE HONOREES RECOGNIZED

IRVING, Texas – Conference USA announced the 14 student-athletes receiving the C-USA Spring Spirit of Service Award today. The C-USA Spirit of Service Award is designed to recognize the community service efforts of the league's student-athletes, based upon significant community service, good academic standing and participation in their elected sport. The Spirit of Service award is presented three times throughout the season, with today's honorees representing spring sports: baseball, golf, softball, tennis, and outdoor track & field.

2017-18 Spring C-USA Spirit of Service Honorees:

Meredith Harris, Charlotte, Softball
Alec Dominguez, FIU, Men's Track & Field/Cross Country
Bethany Hardcastle, Florida Atlantic, Women's Track & Field
Morgan Turkoly, Louisiana Tech, Softball
Abigail Tolbert, Marshall, Softball
Aaron Aucker, Middle Tennessee, Baseball
Baylee Nelson, North Texas, Women's Track & Field
Chad Hess, Old Dominion, Men's Golf
Amanda Pasko, Rice, Women's Track & Field
Samantha Papp, Southern Miss, Softball
Analyse Petree, UAB, Softball
Courtney Clayton, UTEP, Softball
Erica Sanchez, UTSA, Softball
Mary Joiner, WKU, Women's Golf

Meredith Harris accumulated a record-breaking 520 hours and 45 minutes of community service as a Charlotte softball student-athlete. The junior displayed a passion for giving back and it earned her the athletic department's Female Pure Gold Service Award. She also balanced a 3.941 as an English major and Spanish minor, and will begin her MBA route in the fall. Harris was named to the Chancellor's List every semester and her academic accolades this year include C-USA Commissioner's Academic Medal and All-Academic Team recognition. On the field, she started 41 games for the 49ers while leading the team in doubles and triples.

Alec Dominguez strived to make a difference in the FIU community this year while competing as a track and cross country student-athlete with a 3.1 in recreation in sport management. The sophomore finished in the top 20 in the 1500m at the C-USA Outdoor Championship and logged his best 1500m outdoor time of 4:32.32 at the University of Miami Alumni Invitational. In addition to his commitment to competition, he also served as this year's Student Athlete Leadership Council team captain for Relay for Life, where he organized and coordinated fundraisers. His work also included Read Across America and Love Better, which increases relationship violence awareness.

Bethany Hardcastle represented Florida Atlantic athletics in more ways than one. As a track & field junior, she notched eight top-10 finishes throughout the spring indoor and outdoor seasons while maintaining a 3.524 as an exercise science and health promotion student. She is a three-time recipient of both the C-USA Commissioner's and Athletic Director's honor rolls. During her time away from the track and classroom, Hardcastle volunteered at elementary and middle schools, Boca Helping Hands and a physical therapy office.

Louisiana Tech's **Morgan Turkoly** became the 2018 C-USA Player of the Year and a three-time NFCA All-Mideast Region this season, but her excellence reached beyond the softball field. As an accounting junior, Turkoly balanced a 3.78 GPA while volunteering at multiple community service projects, including a food drive, 4-PAWS Rescue, Domestic Abuse Resistance Team events and a softball clinic. Throughout her time as a Lady Techster, the outfielder has claimed three C-USA Commissioner's Honor Roll selections, three C-USA Commissioner's Academic Medals and two C-USA All-Academic Team nods.

Marshall softball's **Abigail Tolbert** crafted a breakout junior season with an outstanding display of service to pair with it. Owning just one inning pitched in her first two seasons, the right-hander led the Thundering Herd in appearances, starts, ERA, wins, complete games, shutouts, innings pitched and strikeouts in 2018. She is a former NFCA All-America Scholar Athlete and a three-time C-USA Commissioner's Honor Roll recipient after compiling a 3.63 this semester in her biology and psychology studies. In her time away from school and softball, Tolbert spent her time visiting hospitals, leading Fellowship of Christian Athletes and participating in playground cleanup, to name a few service events.

Senior **Aaron Aucker** made the most of his final season at Middle Tennessee. The baseball student-athlete garnered numerous awards on and off the field, and set aside opportunity to give back to the community. In crafting a 3.44 in biology and chemistry, the Knoxville, Tennessee, native, earned a place on the 2018 Google Cloud Academic All-America Third Team and became Middle Tennessee's Co-Male Scholar Athlete of the Year. His community service included Team Impact, the Albert Pujols Foundation, the American Cancer Society and Special Olympics. On the field, Aucker collected a C-USA Second-Team All-Conference nod and ranked among the league leaders in RBI, doubles, bases, home runs, slugging, batting and on-base percentages.

Baylee Nelson was perfect in the classroom this semester with a 4.0 in integrative studies, which earned her spots on the C-USA Honor Roll and North Texas' Dean's List. The track & field junior also spent her third year assisting in the implementation of the Denton ISD 5th Grade Track and Field Meet, along with many clothing drives and even the fostering of three dogs from the Human Society of North Texas. On the track, Nelson posted three top-five finishes in 800m outdoor events, and came in fourth at the C-USA Indoor Championships. She won two individual titles in the 1,000m and mile runs at the JD Martin Invite.

Old Dominion senior **Chad Hess** inked a second-place finish at the ODU/OBX Intercollegiate golf tournament and finished in the top five at the Kingsmill Intercollegiate for the Monarchs. Hess has volunteered for such organizations as the Monarchs Champion Program. He is a youth bible study leader and has volunteered as a soccer coach in the Norfolk, Virginia, community. The Orefield, Pennsylvania, native boasts a 3.82 GPA in elementary education and has earned a spot on the Dean's List, C-USA Commissioner's Honor Roll and received the C-USA Commissioner's Academic Medal.

Amanda Pasko competed at six meets during the outdoor track & field season in the javelin throw for Rice, with her best mark at the Houston Alumni Invitational with a throw of 32.81 meters. The senior helped during the aftermath of Hurricane Harvey with cleanup, renovating a house and helped a family move into a new home. Pasko majored in kinesiology with a 4.2 GPA to earn a Summa Cum Laude at

graduation and was named to the C-USA Commissioner's Honor Roll for four straight years, as well as receiving the C-USA Commissioner's Academic Medal.

Hattiesburg, Mississippi, native **Samantha Papp** is on track to graduate in May 2019 from Southern Miss with a 4.0 GPA in special education in the Honors College. She was named to the 2018 C-USA Softball All-Academic Team this year, as well as earning the C-USA Commissioner's Academic Medal and a spot on the C-USA Commissioner's Honor Roll. Papp started all 55 games for the Golden Eagles. She is ranked second on the team in multi-hit games with 10 and leads the team in hits (51), RBI (28) and total bases (71). She has contributed to the community through volunteering with the Arc of Southeast Mississippi, Special Olympics, Meals on Wheels and the SAAC Hunger Food Drive over the past year.

Analyse Petree finished her junior year with a 3.84 GPA in sociology. She is a member of the 2018 C-USA Softball All-Academic Team, received the C-USA Commissioner's Academic Medal and earned C-USA Commissioner's Honor Roll recognition. Petree leads the Blazers in home runs and is second on the team in slugging percentage. She has given her time to the Ronald McDonald House, the Children's of Alabama Hospital and the Miracle League of Gardendale in the Birmingham, Alabama, community.

UTEP's **Courtney Clayton** graduated in May with a 3.87 GPA in health promotion and a minor in nutrition while competing for the Miners softball team. Clayton was honored with the C-USA Commissioner's Academic Medal all four years, named to the C-USA Commissioner's Honor Roll and earned C-USA Softball All-Academic Team accolades three-consecutive years. The Oregon native accumulated over 80 hours of community service during the 2017-18 academic year, volunteering for the Animal Rescue League of El Paso and the Special Olympics of El Paso and Texas. Clayton led C-USA with a .413 batting average and ranked in the top five in multiple offensive categories, garnering her a 2018 All-Conference USA First-Team pick.

Erica Sanchez of UTSA has donated over 70 hours of her time to the San Antonio community through the North Central Baptist Hospital, San Antonio Food Bank and UTSA's Rowdy Readers Program. She played for the Roadrunners in more than 140 games in her career and has a .920 fielding percentage, with 173 putouts and 195 assists. Sanchez graduated this past May with a 3.27 GPA in kinesiology and is a C-USA Commissioner's Honor Roll honoree.

Rounding out the 2018 Spring Spirit of Service Awards is WKU sophomore **Mary Joiner**, who led the Lady Topper's golf team with a stroke average of 73.9, which is the best single-season average in WKU history. Joiner participated in community service events throughout the year, including Hilltoppers with Heart, National Girls and Women in Sports Day and Dance Big Red. The Franklin, Kentucky, native boasts a 3.88 GPA in finance and was named to the C-USA Women's Golf All-Academic Team and received the C-USA Commissioner's Academic Medal.

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