Wolf Pack gears up for 2011 football season

Coming off the best season in school history, the Wolf Pack football team is gearing up for another exciting campaign in 2011. Nevada will take on a challenging schedule in 2011 that features two games against projected Top 25 teams and five games against future Mountain West Conference foes.

Nevada’s tough nonconference schedule includes games at Oregon, Texas Tech and Boise State, as well as home games against UNLV and New Mexico. Nevada will defend its Western Athletic Conference crown with four of its seven conference games at home and will play just three WAC road games. The home slate of WAC games includes Fresno State and Hawaii making trips to Mackay Stadium.

Nevada fans will have the opportunity to see four of their future Mountain West foes in action in the first four games at home as UNLV, New Mexico, Fresno State and Hawaii will all come to Mackay Stadium. The bye week is also situated well during the first week of November, giving the Pack a week off after eight games and before the final four games of the season.

Nevada is coming off a 13-1 season in 2010 in which the Wolf Pack won the Western Athletic Conference title, beat Boston College in the Kraft Fight Hunger Bowl and finished No. 11 in the nation. The Wolf Pack returns 14 starters from last year’s “Dream Team” and is well represented in the preseason magazines, including having 14 players selected to the All-WAC teams by Phil Steele’s College Football Preview.

Season ticket prices remain the same in 2011 with general admission seats costing $95 and reserved seating starting at $125. To purchase tickets, call the Wolf Pack Ticket Office at (775) 348-PaCK (7225) or visit www.nevadawolfpack.com.
Nevada teams score high in latest NCAA Academic Progress Rate report

The University of Nevada’s athletics teams have turned in their seventh consecutive year of penalty-free academic performance in the latest Academic Progress Rates report released by the NCAA this spring.

Nevada saw five of its teams—men’s golf, men’s tennis, women’s soccer, women’s tennis and mixed rifle—turn in perfect 1000 marks for the 2009-10 academic year, meaning that those teams had perfect eligibility and retention of all of their student-athletes.

Nevada’s men’s golf team turned in a perfect 1000 multi-year APR in the latest numbers and received a public recognition award as part of the 2011 NCAA Division I Academic Performance Program.

In the multi-year APR numbers, which covers the 2006-07, 2007-08, 2008-09 and 2009-10 academic years, the Wolf Pack saw four of its teams improve their scores from one year ago, including men’s golf, men’s tennis, women’s basketball and women’s cross country, while volleyball remained the same. All but one of Nevada’s teams turned in multi-year APR scores above the 925 standard in this year’s report. The Wolf Pack men’s basketball team had a multi-year score of 919 but received a waiver of any potential academic penalties by the NCAA due to the unique situation of having two underclassmen leave for the NBA Draft following the 2009-10 season.

“Our continued success with our team’s APR numbers reflect the importance our student-athletes, coaches and staff as well as the professors and staff on the University of Nevada campus place on academics,” Nevada Director of Athletics Cary Groth said. “We are pleased that we are meeting the NCAA standards, but we still have many opportunities to improve. Our goal is to continue to provide our student-athletes with the academic support they need to succeed and ultimately leave the University of Nevada as graduates.”

The APR is a real-time “snapshot” of a team’s academic success and is used by the NCAA and universities to measure current academic success by looking at the academic progress of each current student-athlete. It includes eligibility, retention and graduation as factors in the rate calculation. Each student-athlete can add two points to the team’s overall score per semester, including one for academic eligibility and one for returning to school the next semester or graduating.

The 925 threshold set by the NCAA equals roughly a 60 percent Graduation Success Rate. Teams that score below 925 and have a student-athlete who failed academically and left school can lose scholarships. Teams can lose up to 10 percent of their scholarships each year for poor academic performance under the immediate penalty structure and also face a historical penalty structure.

“Just as we support our student-athletes to help them achieve success in their field of competition, it remains our equally high priority to help them stay on the path to earn their college degrees,” said University President Marc Johnson. “I extend my appreciation and congratulations to our student-athletes and to the coaches, faculty and staff who support them.”

Nevada’s complete APR report and APR data on all NCAA institutions is available online at www.ncaa.org.

Soccer’s Alyx Sacks ’11 (left) and football’s Doyle Miller ’11 and Adam Liranzo ’11 (below) were among the 69 Wolf Pack student-athletes to earn their degrees this year.

Wolf Pack Athletics sees 69 student-athletes graduate in 2010-11

Forty-two Wolf Pack student-athletes representing 13 teams applied for graduation at the University of Nevada this spring and summer. Those 42 graduates joined 27 student-athletes who earned their degrees this winter for a total of 69 members of the Wolf Pack graduating in the 2010-11 academic year.

Including this year’s 69 graduates, Nevada has seen 366 of its student-athletes earn their degrees in the past six years.

“I am proud of all of our student-athletes who are leaving the University of Nevada with their degrees,” Nevada Director of Athletics Cary Groth said. “Wolf Pack student-athletes are committed to excellence in the classroom and on the field of competition, and we congratulate them and wish them the best as they enter the next phase of their lives.”
Mountain West unveils new brand

The Mountain West Conference unveiled the league’s new brand direction and conference identity this spring, ushering in a new era in the 13-year history of the Mountain West with a new logo nicknamed “The Rock” and the tagline, “This is our time.”

In addition to presenting a new Mountain West logo and theme, Commissioner Craig Thompson outlined the most comprehensive branding effort in the history of the conference. As the basis for this major rebranding initiative, the conference solicited the opinions of more than 8,000 constituents including members of the Mountain West Board of Directors, athletic administrators, coaches, fans and members of the media.

“This initiative is emblematic of the evolution of our league,” Thompson said. “The overwhelming majority of the people we spoke to said the Mountain West is bold, feisty and highly competitive, and we strongly believe these qualities are reflected in our new brand identity and our new logo.”

The unique logo itself is a strong symbol of a league on the rise, invoking comparisons to stately campus buildings and the Rock of Gibraltar. It is unlike any other conference mark. Reflecting the expanded membership from the mountains to the ocean and addressing the previous prevalence of mountain imagery and word marks, the letters representing “Mountain” and “West” are given equal weight and dimension.

“The attitude of the Mountain West Conference and the new logo is very bold and dynamic. It fits the Mountain West Conference with the new membership and the direction the conference is moving in,” Nevada Director of Athletics Cary Groth said. “I love the new logo. It is clean and succinct. It tells a story of progressiveness, newness, excitement. It’s perfect for the Mountain West Conference.”

Wolf Pack adds two new scholarship endowments

Scholarship endowments honoring longtime University of Nevada supporters Ron Gash and Richard and Winifred Elmore are the most recent gifts that will benefit Wolf Pack student-athletes.

The Ron R. Gash Memorial Scholarship Endowment has been established in honor of the late Ron Gash and will be given to Wolf Pack student-athletes with a preference to students from rural Nevada. Gash maintained lifelong friendships from his childhood in White Pine County, his time at Carson Middle School, Wooster High School and the University of Nevada, as well as from his career traveling the state working for the Nevada Department of Transportation. Sports remained among his many hobbies as he attended local wrestling tournaments, baseball spring training and Wolf Pack basketball and football games.

“Ron R. Gash was an avid fan of the Wolf Pack. He was a talented long-distance runner and wrestler during Wooster High School’s years of athletic dominance in the 1980s. He loved Nevada and the outdoors, especially the Ruby Mountains,” Gash’s longtime friend Tom Viloria said.

The Richard and Winifred Elmore Family Scholarship Endowment has been established in honor of the Elmore family’s commitment to education. Richard and Winifred have been longtime Wolf Pack supporters and football and basketball season ticket holders.

After the passing of Richard’s father, the Elmore family had set up a personal trust to allow all of their children and grandchildren to receive a college education. Upon Richard’s passing, the family decided to establish this scholarship endowment to provide educational opportunities to Nevada Wolf Pack men’s and women’s basketball student-athletes, an extension of the Elmore family’s philosophy towards education.

Nevada student-athletes currently benefit from 35 endowed scholarships. Nevada honors each of the scholarship recipients and gives the donors a chance to meet those student-athletes benefiting from the endowments at Nevada’s annual Academic Excellence Brunch in November.

Tekla Martin, Nevada’s associate athletics director for development, said, “Scholarship endowments are vital to the future of Wolf Pack athletics scholarships as they allow us to fund those scholarships in perpetuity.”

For more information about endowed scholarships or to make a gift, please contact Tekla Martin, (775) 682-6976 or tjmartin@unr.edu.
Football's Colin Kaepernick and basketball's Tahnee Robinson have been named the 2010-11 Doc Martie & Ruth I. Russell Award winners as the University of Nevada's top male and female senior student-athletes.

“I can’t think of two more deserving recipients of our athletics department’s most prestigious awards than Colin and Tahnee,” Director of Athletics Cary Groth said. “Both student-athletes turned in outstanding athletics careers, making their marks in the school record books and bringing national prestige to the University of Nevada. They have excelled in competition, the classroom and the community and are truly great representatives of what student-athletes should be.”

The awards were named for J.E. “Doc” Martie, a former Nevada men's basketball coach and administrator, and Ruth I. Russell, a former director of women's athletics. Student-athletes are nominated by their head coaches and must be in their final year of eligibility and in good academic standing. The award winners are chosen in a vote by the athletics department staff.

Colin Kaepernick
A quarterback from Turlock, Calif., Kaepernick turned in arguably the best career by a student-athlete in the 104-year history of the Wolf Pack football program. He helped Nevada to a 13-1 record, a top-15 national ranking, a Western Athletic Conference co-championship and a victory in the Kraft Fight Hunger Bowl in his senior season. He also earned All-American honors from several publications and was named the WAC Co-Offensive Player of the Year for the second time in his career in 2010 (also in 2008). A three-time All-WAC honoree and two-time WAC All-Academic selection, Kaepernick set numerous school, conference and national records throughout his Nevada career, appearing in the Wolf Pack record book 36 times. He became the first quarterback in NCAA history to rush for more than 4,000 yards and throw for more than 9,000 yards in a career. He is also the only player in NCAA history to rush for 1,000 yards and throw for 2,000 yards in three consecutive seasons and tied Eric Crouch of Nebraska for the national record for touchdowns by a quarterback with 59. He set school career records for conventional scoring, touchdowns (rushing, passing and total) and total offense. Kaepernick earned his degree in management in December of 2010 and was taken in the second round of the 2011 NFL Draft by the San Francisco 49ers.

Wolf Pack football coach Chris Ault said: “Colin is a very gifted and talented young man who always represented our program and university in the highest degree. His career, on and off the field, has been extraordinary to say the least. His leadership, athletic ability and competitive attitude separated him from most. He truly was a champion in all respects and is a very deserving recipient of the Doc Martie Award. We’re all very proud of him; he will be a wonderful ambassador for our University and football program.”

Tahnee Robinson
A guard from Fort Washakie, Wyo., Robinson became one of the most prolific women's basketball student-athletes ever to wear the Silver and Blue. She led Nevada to the best season in school history with a 22-11 record and a second-round appearance in the Women’s National Invitation Tournament in 2010-11. She spent her senior season ranked in the top 15 in the nation in scoring, ending the year ranked ninth in the NCAA with 22.1 points per game. Robinson was also named one of five finalists for the Sullivan Award, which is annually presented to the nation's top amateur athlete. A two-time first-team All-WAC honoree, she was named a Women's Basketball Coaches Association All-Region 7 selection and ranked in the nation's top 20 for three-pointers per game and three-point percentage in 2011. The 2009-10 WAC Newcomer of the Year, Robinson topped the 1,000-point mark and appears in the Nevada record book 17 times after just two seasons, most notably ranking second in all-time career three-pointers made and three-point percentage. Robinson is on pace to earn her degree in general studies this summer and became the first player in school history to be selected in the WNBA Draft when she was taken by the Phoenix Suns and traded to the Connecticut Sun in the third round this year.

Nevada women's basketball coach Jane Albright said: “Tahnee has been a true ambassador for the University, the city of Reno and Native Americans across the country. She was the team captain and MVP and led us to the best season in the history of our program. Her influence will continue as she begins her professional career, but she will always be a member of our Pack.”