

UC DAVIS TO ADD WOMEN'S FIELD HOCKEY IN 2009-10

DAVIS, Calif. -- Field hockey will become UC Davis' 15th women's varsity sport overall, the sixth added since the 1996-97 academic year when it begins competition in Fall 2009, Director of Athletics Greg Warzecka announced on Friday.

The addition of women's field hockey as the university's newest varsity sport came about as the result of the campus's ongoing practice of assessing the intercollegiate athletics program. It started with an invitation to club sport teams in June 2007 to attend an informational meeting about intercollegiate athletics and to submit proposals for elevation to varsity status. An extensive review was undertaken, which included participation by the Sports Selection Advisory Committee chaired by Nona Richardson, Senior Associate Athletics Director.

"Field hockey is an exciting addition to our athletics program," said Warzecka. "It is an NCAA championship sport with local Division I competition available, and we view it as having the potential to be competitively successful."

Warzecka said he and his staff will use the upcoming 2008-09 academic year to hire a coach, recruit student-athletes, complete a schedule, and make other necessary preparations. UC Davis will have some of its scheduling concerns alleviated with an invitation to join the NorPac Conference. The Aggies will form the conference's Western Division, along with Stanford University, the University of California, Berkeley, and the University of the Pacific. Other league members in the Eastern Division include Appalachian State University and Davidson College of North Carolina, and Longwood University and Radford University of Virginia.

The NCAA sponsors women's field hockey championships for each of its three divisions with more than 250 institutions sponsoring the sport overall, including 76 in Division I. The NorPac has participated in the last seven NCAA Championship tournaments.

"With a strong recruiting base in the San Diego, San Francisco Bay and Northern California areas, it's the right sport for UC Davis at this time," said Richardson. "With limited numbers of Division I programs in California, we have become another viable option for female student-athletes to remain in Northern California."

Consistent with UC Davis' continuing history of athletics program expansion for women, field hockey is the sixth women's program added at UC Davis in the past 12 years. It joins rowing, lacrosse, water polo, indoor track and field, and golf which have each enjoyed success during their brief tenures. Golf was the most recent addition, in 2005-06.

Rowing won a pair of NCAA Division II Championships, water polo placed a program-best fourth at this year's NCAA Tournament and also hosted the 2006 championship, and golf advanced to the national finals this spring in just its third year as a varsity sport.

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