



TOURNAMENT FIELD

Cal State Fullerton	Big West
Florida Gulf Coast	Atlantic Sun
Fresno State	Mountain West
Mississippi State	SEC
Texas Tech	Big 12

SCHEDULE

Thursday, Feb. 16

- Fresno State vs. Mississippi State, 10 a.m.
- Fresno State vs. Florida Gulf Coast, 1 p.m.
- Texas Tech vs. Cal State Fullerton, 4 p.m.
- Texas Tech vs. Florida Gulf Coast, 7 p.m.

Friday, Feb. 17

- Mississippi State vs. Cal State Fullerton, 10 a.m.
- Florida Gulf Coast vs. Cal State Fullerton, 1 p.m.
- Florida Gulf Coast vs. Fresno State, 4 p.m.
- Mississippi State vs. Texas Tech, 7 p.m.

Saturday, Feb. 18

- Cal State Fullerton vs. Texas Tech, 9 a.m.
- Cal State Fullerton vs. Fresno State, 11:45 a.m.
- Florida Gulf Coast vs. Mississippi State, 2:30 p.m.

Sunday, Feb. 19

- Texas Tech vs. Fresno State, 9:00 a.m.

**All times listed in local CT*

Games played at Nancy Almaraz Stadium

PV College Challenge

Session 2 of the Puerto Vallarta College Challenge is a chance to watch some of the true up-and-coming college softball programs get their rosters sharpened for an exciting year to come.

On top of that, the geographical mix within Session 2 gives each team some unique flavor for their schedule. Cal State Fullerton and Fresno State will test their mettle against Eastern forces Mississippi State and Florida Gulf Coast, with Texas Tech also taking advantage of this opportunity.

Fans can watch as many as four games on Feb. 16 and 17; the event kicks off with Fresno State playing Mississippi State at 10 a.m. CT on the 16th. Each team gets to play five games at Nancy Almaraz Stadium; the last game scheduled is on the 19th, with Texas Tech taking on Fresno State.

All of these programs are working in talented athletes from the freshman ranks; several teams closed the 2016 regular season with impressive resumes – the RPI standings had Fresno State at No. 21, Cal State Fullerton at No. 25, and Mississippi State at No. 39.

Event History

The inaugural Puerto Vallarta College Challenge was held in 2015, featuring the teams from BYU, Nevada, Northern Colorado and Southern Illinois. Those were the first fastpitch games in NCAA history played outside the United States.

As word spread about this unique softball setting, Triple Crown Sports and city officials at Puerto Vallarta agreed in to pool resources and improve almost every aspect of Nancy Almaraz Stadium, site of the event. While the tournament was not held in 2016, there was enough time to complete the work on the stadium, as well as contact more D-I fastpitch programs to build a dynamic 10-team field for 2017.

With its February placement, the Puerto Vallarta College Challenge offers programs a warm-weather setting to help launch their spring schedules, while also giving fans a chance to follow their favorite teams while enjoying a memorable oceanside resort retreat and vacation.

School	2016 Record	Letterwinners R/L	Pitchers R/L	Head Coach (Record / Year)	Postseason
Cal State Fullerton	45-16	16/9	4/3	Kelly Ford (95-72-1 / 4th)	NCAA Regional
Florida Gulf Coast	32-27	10/4	3/1	David Deiros (544-268-3 / 15th)	None
Fresno State	42-12-1	9/5	2/3	Linda Garza (146-134-2 / 6th)	NCAA Regional
Mississippi State	26-31	16/2	4/1	Vann Stuedeman (167-121 / 6th)	None
Texas Tech	23-32	17/6	3/2	Adrian Gregory (48-58 / 3rd)	None

CAL STATE FULERTON

The Titans had an impressive run in 2016, going 45-16 (17-4 in the Big West Conference) and reaching the NCAA tournament before losing to UCLA at regionals – that was the first postseason appearance for CSF since 2009.



Senior outfielder Delynn Rippey is back after leading the team in hitting at .373; she also stole 14 bases and drove in 34 runs. Samantha Vandiver, a junior, did excellent work as leadoff hitter, closing at .340 with a team-high 48 runs. Providing power will be Alexis Gonzalez, who had nine home runs and 45 RBI to go with a solid .416 on-base percentage.

The pitching situation will require some clarity, although a key returning arm belongs to sophomore Sydney Golden, who was 18-6 last year with a 1.97 ERA in 138.2 innings. Whether she increases her workload or not, there's about 240 innings of work remaining to be tackled.

NOTE: Freshman Kelsie Whitmore played co-ed baseball in the summer of 2016 with the Sonoma Stompers, making her one of a handful of women to play professional baseball since the 1950's. She played on her high school baseball team in Temecula, CA. NCAA rules allow her to play one sport professionally without affecting her eligibility in softball.

FLORIDA GULF COAST

The Eagles were 32-27 in 2016 and played their best during Atlantic Sun Conference play, taking first place there with a 13-5 mark. But an upset loss to fifth-seeded USC Upstate in the tournament championships kept FGCU from reaching the NCAA tournament.



Head coach David Deiros (the only coach in the program's 14-year history) will have an experienced group back in hopes of making that next jump, with five returning starters and three returning pitchers. Priming the offense will be junior Kelsey Huff, who hit .366 last year with a .434 OBP – she added 25 stolen bases and scored 46 runs. Sophomore Racquel Fournet provided reliable punch with 45 RBI a year ago, hitting .354 and posting a .429 OBP.

Sophomore pitcher Riley Randolph had an eye-opening debut for the Eagles, going 16-5 with a 1.39 ERA. Getting some help behind her will be a key for FGCU, as the other pitchers in 2016 closed with a 16-22 record.

NOTE: Thanks to tournaments and the non-conference schedule, FGCU plays the vast majority of its games at home in Fort Myers, but there's one stretch in April when the Eagles play 10 straight on the road.

FRESNO STATE

The Bulldogs relished a powerful performance last year, going 42-12-1 (22-1 in the Mountain West Conference) and getting their first NCAA Regional victory since 2011 before being eliminated in the Los Angeles Regional by Cal State Fullerton. Head coach Trisha Ford, who coached the program to two MWC titles and two NCAA appearances in her four years, left Fresno State in the offseason and is now running the show at Arizona State.



With eight seniors graduated and just five starters returning, new coach Linda Garza will try to stabilize the situation. There's no better place to start than senior Kierra Willis, the 2016 MWC player of the year who hit .345 and drove in 45 runs while scoring 54 times in her 55 starts. She will get support from senior Lindsey Willmon, who hit .363 last year, her first after transferring from Hawaii.

The pitching staff loses 25-game winner Jill Compton; one hurler with plans to rise to the occasion is sophomore Kamalani Dung, who won eight games as a freshman.

NOTE: While hitting at the bottom of the order, Willmon led Fresno State with 12 home runs (including two grand slams). She set a school and MWC single-game record when she drove in nine runs in an 18-2 win against Boise State.

MISSISSIPPI STATE

The Bulldogs felt the effects of roster turnover and an unusually difficult schedule in 2016, breaking a four-year stretch of earning a berth in the NCAA Tournament and making the best of it with a 26-31 record. With six starters returning, coach Vann Stuedeman expects a quick rebound for a roster that hit just .247 last year and won a mere three games in SEC action.



Senior third baseman Caroline Seitz is a key to the plan; she hit .282 with five home runs and 31 RBI and should finish in the top 5 in multiple career records for MSU. Senior catcher Katie Anne Bailey hit .271 and drove in 30 runs and hopes to return to her earlier form, when she hit .331 as a sophomore.

The pitching chores will rest most heavily upon senior Alexis Silkwood and junior Holly Ward. Silkwood (who won 26 games as a sophomore) threw 117 innings and posted a 3.10 ERA, while Ward won nine games and had a 2.74 ERA. Freshman Emily Mitchell may get a crack at some opportunities; she was a two-time all-state pitcher in Georgia.

NOTE: The Bulldogs signed a robust recruiting class in November for the fall of 2017 – nine players total. The group was ranked fourth nationally by FloSoftball, with No. 4 overall recruit Mia Davidson (the 2016 Gatorade player of the year in North Carolina) leading the way.

TEXAS TECH

The Red Raiders reached the NCAA Tournament in three straight years (2010-12) and are hoping to regain that type of standing in the third season under coach Adrian Gregory. It'll be a process, as the team went 23-32 last year and was picked to finish sixth in the preseason Big 12 poll.



Providing the heartbeat of the batting order is senior Kierra Miles, who had 17 home runs, 50 RBI and a .420 on-base percentage in 2016. Getting on base in front of her will likely be the task of sophomore Kiani Ramsey, who hit .a team-best .348 in her debut.

Last year's two primary pitchers are back, both seniors and both looking to sharpen their results after a year of absorbing lessons about Big 12 competition. Dominique Alcocer (a native of Mexico City) won eight games last year in 20 starts, while Mattison Maisel pitched the most innings (156) and also notched four saves. Expect freshman Hannah Broseman (1.53 ERA in three seasons in high school) to get a look.

NOTE: In a sign that the roster is getting stronger, Texas Tech signed two players in its November recruiting class for fall 2017 that were ranked in the top 100 by FloSoftball. Erin Edmondson (No. 59) is a lefty pitcher and outfielder; Kelcy Leach (No. 75) is a catcher who hit a home run with a broken hand to get her high school team into the playoffs.



PAST RESULTS - 2015

February 26

Northern Colorado 10, Southern Illinois 10
BYU 7, Nevada 5

February 27

BYU 5, Northern Colorado 4
Northern Colorado 2, Nevada 1
BYU 8, Southern Illinois 0
Southern Illinois 6, Nevada 5

February 28

Nevada 23, Southern Illinois 9
BYU 8, Southern Illinois 1
Northern Colorado 6, Nevada 4

TOURNAMENT FIELD - 2015

BYU (West Coast)
Nevada (Mountain West)
Northern Colorado (Big Sky)
Southern Illinois (Missouri Valley)

TOURNAMENT FIELD - 2017

Session #1

Auburn (SEC)
BYU (West Coast)
Nebraska (Big Ten)
Oklahoma (Big 12)
Washington (Pac-12)

Session #2

Cal State Fullerton (Big West)
Florida Gulf Coast (Atlantic Sun)
Fresno State (Mountain West)
Mississippi State (SEC)
Texas Tech (Big 12)

SINGLE GAME RECORDS

TEAM

Most Runs (Game): 23 - Nevada (vs. Southern Illinois, 2015)
Most Runs (Inning): 11 - Nevada (vs. Southern Illinois, 2015)
Most Hits: 20 - Nevada (vs. Southern Illinois, 2015)
Most Doubles: 4 - Northern Colorado (vs. Southern Illinois, 2015); Nevada (vs. Southern Illinois, 2015)
Most Triples: 1 - BYU (vs. Southern Illinois, 2015); Northern Colorado (vs. Nevada, 2015)
Most Home Runs: 2 - BYU (vs. Northern Colorado, 2015); Nevada (vs. SIU, 2015); BYU (vs. Southern Illinois, 2015)
Most Stolen Bases: 5 - BYU (vs. Southern Illinois, 2015)
Most Walks Drawn: 9 - Northern Colorado (vs. BYU, 2015); Nevada (vs. Southern Illinois, 2015)
Longest Game: 8 innings / 2:45 (Northern Colorado vs. Southern Illinois, 2015)

INDIVIDUAL

Most Runs: 5 - Danielle Wiltz, Nevada (vs. Southern Illinois, 2015)
Most Hits: 4 - Melissa Marcovecchio, Northern Colorado (vs. Southern Illinois); Mercedes O'Connor, BYU (vs. Southern Illinois); Karley Hopkins, Danielle Wiltz, Amanda Weis, Nevada (vs. Southern Illinois, 2015)
Most Doubles: 2 - Nicole Hudson, Northern Colorado (vs. Southern Illinois); Amanda Weis, Nevada (vs. Southern Illinois, 2015); Merri Anne Patterson, Southern Illinois (vs. Northern Colorado, 2015)
Most Triples: 1 - Gordy Bravo, BYU (vs. Southern Illinois, 2015); Melissa Marcovecchio, Northern Colorado (vs. Southern Illinois, 2015)
Most Home Runs: 2 - Mercedes O'Connor, BYU (vs. Northern Colorado, 2015)
Most Stolen Bases: 3 - Lacey Hofstedt, BYU (vs. Nevada, 2015)
Most RBI: 6 - Amanda Weis, Nevada (vs. Southern Illinois, 2015)
Most Strikeouts by a Pitcher: 8 - Katie Bertelsen, Southern Illinois (vs. Northern Colorado); McKenna Isenberg, Nevada (vs. Northern Colorado, 2015)

RECORDS BY SCHOOL

School	Record
BYU	4-0
Northern Colorado	2-1-1
Nevada	1-4
Southern Illinois	1-3-1

RECORDS BY CONFERENCE

Conference	Record
West Coast	4-0
Big Sky	2-1-1
Mountain West	1-4
Missouri Valley	1-3-1

About Triple Crown Sports

Based in Fort Collins, CO., Triple Crown Sports has been producing events in youth athletics and the college ranks for more than 30 years. TCS runs both the preseason and postseason WNIT basketball events and produces the men's and women's Cancun Challenge tournaments in November, which have been recognized by Sports Illustrated as a top-5 destination tournament for D-I basketball programs. TCS fastpitch tournaments (including the 1,000-team Sparkler/Fireworks event) draw the nation's finest club programs, and hundreds of college coaches attend TCS events for recruiting purposes.