

2009-10 BIG WEST WOMEN'S BASKETBALL



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Big West Women's Basketball Specialty Awards Announced

Irvine, Calif. - The 2009-10 edition of the Big West women's basketball specialty awards were announced today, with UC Davis senior Haylee Donaghe nabbing Defensive Player of the Year, Pacific's Christina Thompson garnering Sixth Woman of the Year accolades and UC Santa Barbara's Ariana Gnekow winning the Best Hustle honor.

Donaghe, a sixth-year senior, was the catalyst of an excellent UCD defensive club. The native of Atascadero, Calif., was tied for the most steals in the Big West (67) and ranked second in steals per game (2.31). The honorable mention All-Big West selection was just as good defensively against conference opposition as she collected 67 thefts and averaged 2.3 steals over her 16 contests, both numbers ranking second in Big West-only games. Donaghe also collected 2.7 rebounds per game, blocked a trio of shots and committed just 33 personal fouls in her 29 games. She also picked up a career-best and Big West season-high nine steals on January 23 against Pacific. Donaghe's selection at the Defensive Player of the Year is the first individual honor for a Aggie player in the program's short Division I history.

Despite being a post player on a predominately jumpshooting Pacific team, Thompson was her club's leading scorer and third-leading rebounder. In only 19.3 minutes per game as a reserve, the sophomore averaged 11.1 points and 4.3 rebounds per outing while shooting 47.8% from the floor. Against conference foes, Thompson was even better, averaging 11.5 points, 6.5 rebounds and shooting 50.7% from the field. Thompson had a number of big efforts off the bench for the Tigers, dropping 30 points in a loss to Cal State Fullerton on January 4 and pouring in 23 points and adding three blocks in a key overtime win at Cal State Northridge January 2. Thompson also becomes the first Pacific player to earn Sixth Woman of the Year honors since Gillian d'Hondt claimed the honor in 2003-04.

A former walk-on who was awarded a scholarship, Gnekow was all over the floor for the Gauchos this season. She averaged 4.8 points and 4.8 rebounds, while also picking up 22 steals and blocking eight shots. Gnekow proved herself to be one of UCSB's best big-game performers, evidenced by the 12 points, six rebounds, four assists, three steals and two blocks against eventual regular season champion UC Davis (February 6). Gnekow also picked up a double-double against Cal State Bakersfield in the regular season finale (13 pts., 13 reb) and had 10 games of six or more boards. She also had six games of three or more offensive caroms and had at least one steal in 15 of her 29 games.

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2009-10 Big West Defensive Player of the Year

Haylee Donaghe, UC Davis

2009-10 Big West Sixth Woman of the Year

Christina Thompson, Pacific

2009-10 Big West Best Hustle

Ariana Gnekow, UC Santa Barbara