



2011-12 Big West Men's Basketball

Big West Conference - 2 Corporate Park, Suite 206, Irvine, CA 92606
Contact: Mike Villamor (Assistant Commissioner/External Affairs - MBB Contact)
Phone: (949) 261-2525 • **Fax:** (949) 261-2528 • **email:** mvillamor@bigwest.org

For Immediate Release - Monday, March 5, 2012

Ware Becomes Seventh Individual To Repeat As Big West Player of the Year **Big West Unveils 2011-12 Men's Basketball All-Conference Team**

IRVINE, CA – Long Beach State, the regular season men's basketball champion for the second year in a row, collected a pair of prized awards as senior guard **Casper Ware** and **Dan Monson** repeated as the Big West Player of the Year and Coach of the Year, respectively. Cal State Northridge phenom **Stephan Hicks** claimed Freshman of the Year honors and Cal State Fullerton junior **D. J. Seeley** garnered Newcomer of the Year recognition. The announcement of the top awards coincided with the revealing of the 2011-12 all-conference team as voted on by the nine head coaches.

Ware becomes the seventh individual in Big West history – and first since UC Irvine's Jerry Green (2001, 2002) – to repeat as the Player of the Year. Among 11 finalists for the Bob Cousy Award, bestowed upon the nation's top point guard, Ware backed up the attention with stellar play throughout the regular season. On the Big West leaderboard, he ranked fourth in scoring (16.9 ppg) and steals (1.5 spg), tied for second in three-pointers made (2.6 pg), tied for fifth in assists (3.2 apg) and was eighth in free throw percentage (.786). Ware scored in double figures in all but two games and finished with 20 points or more eight times. He hit eight three-pointers en route to a career-high 38 points in a win at Pacific on Feb. 9. The Cerritos, Calif. native saved some of his best performances in non-conference play, scoring 28 points against then-No. 9 Pittsburgh (Nov. 16), 26 versus San Diego State (Nov. 19) and 29 at then-No. 4 North Carolina (Dec. 10). He owns a streak of 43 straight games with at least one three-pointers that dates back to last season. The season also witnessed Ware break the Long Beach State career assists record and join the Big West top 10 list, as he currently sits eighth with 528 helpers.

The architect of the program's second successive regular season championship, Monson guided Long Beach State to a 22-8 overall record while playing the nation's No. 1-ranked non-conference strength of schedule. The 49ers toppled nationally ranked foes such as Pittsburgh and Xavier while battling wire-to-wire against additional top 25 programs in San Diego State, Kansas, North Carolina and Creighton. LBSU dominated the Big West schedule to the tune of a 15-1 record and came up one win short of an undefeated conference season. The fifth-year head coach has taken the 49ers from six wins in 2007-08 to 22 in each of the last two seasons. Under his watch, Monson's troops had won 23 straight Big West regular season games, including 11 in a row on the road before getting tripped up in the regular season finale at Cal State Fullerton. LBSU still sports a current streak of 22 straight home wins in the Walter Pyramid, including a 12-0 mark this season. As the No. 1 seed in this week's Big West Tournament, Monson hopes to deliver on the program's first NCAA Tournament appearance in his tenure. He is 50-30 (.625) in Big West games only during his five seasons.

Hicks made a sensational debut in his first season with Cal State Northridge. He ranked seventh in the Big West in scoring (15.1 ppg), third in rebounding (7.1 rpg) and fifth in free throw percentage (.813) as the top freshman in all three categories. A native of Thousand Oaks, Calif., Hicks scored in double figures in his first 16 career games and ended up with 23 double-digit scoring efforts. The 6-5 guard/forward had a season-best 26 points at Cal State Bakersfield on Jan. 28. Hicks made his most impressive splash on Nov. 14 when he notched 22 points and 17 rebounds at Hawai'i. Hicks is the second Matador to earn top freshman honors from the conference, joining Ian Boylan in 2001-02.

Seeley follows in the footsteps of teammate Andre Hardy as the next Titan recipient of the Newcomer of the Year award. After transferring from California, Seeley played a key role in helping Cal State Fullerton to a 21-8 record and 12-4 mark in Big West games. The junior guard averaged 17.0 points per game to rank third among conference scorers and his .444 (63 of 142) three-point field goal percentage is No. 2 in the Big West and on pace to set a Cal State Fullerton single-season record. Seeley, who hails from Stockton, Calif., is among the league leaders in rebounding, field goal percentage, steals and three-point field goals made. He tied for second in the Big West with 12 games of 20 points or more, including a season-high tying 27 in a win against Long Beach State.

The All-Big West First Team has a familiar ring as Ware joins Long Beach State teammate senior **Larry Anderson** and UC Santa Barbara senior **Orlando Johnson** as honorees for the second straight year. Anderson and Johnson are three-time first team recipients while Ware earns the distinction for the second time. Long Beach State senior **T.J. Robinson** also received first team all-conference recognition for the second time in his career. Rounding out the list is Cal State Fullerton's Seeley and UC Riverside senior **Phil Martin**.

The complete 2011-12 Big West men's basketball all-conference team is on the following page.

2011-12 BIG WEST MEN'S BASKETBALL ALL-CONFERENCE TEAM

FIRST TEAM

| Player | School | Ht. | Yr. | Pos. | Hometown |
|------------------|---------------------|------|-----|------|---------------------|
| ^Larry Anderson | Long Beach State | 6-5 | Sr. | G | Long Beach, Calif. |
| ^Orlando Johnson | UC Santa Barbara | 6-5 | Sr. | G | Seaside, Calif. |
| Phil Martin | UC Riverside | 6-4 | Sr. | G | Staten Island, N.Y. |
| +T.J. Robinson | Long Beach State | 6-8 | Sr. | F | West Haven, Conn. |
| D. J. Seeley | Cal State Fullerton | 6-4 | Jr. | G | Stockton, Calif. |
| +Casper Ware | Long Beach State | 5-10 | Sr. | G | Cerritos, Calif. |

SECOND TEAM

| Player | School | Ht. | Yr. | Pos. | Hometown |
|----------------|---------------------|-----|-----|------|-----------------------|
| Omondi Amoke | Cal State Fullerton | 6-7 | Sr. | F | Santa Barbara, Calif. |
| David Hanson | Cal Poly | 6-5 | Sr. | F | Plymouth, Minn. |
| James Nunnally | UC Santa Barbara | 6-7 | Sr. | G | Stockton, Calif. |
| Eugene Phelps | Long Beach State | 6-7 | Sr. | F | Los Angeles, Calif. |
| Kwame Vaughn | Cal State Fullerton | 6-3 | Jr. | G | Oakland, Calif. |
| Michael Wilder | UC Irvine | 6-2 | Jr. | F | Long Beach, Calif. |

HONORABLE MENTION

| Player | School | Ht. | Yr. | Pos. | Hometown |
|----------------|----------------------|-----|-----|------|-----------------------|
| Orane Chin | Cal State Fullerton | 6-7 | Sr. | F | Miramar, Fla. |
| James Ennis | Long Beach State | 6-6 | Jr. | G/F | Ventura, Calif. |
| Travis Fulton | Pacific | 6-6 | Jr. | F | Corona, Calif. |
| Josh Greene | Cal State Northridge | 6-0 | So. | G | Los Angeles, Calif. |
| Stephan Hicks | Cal State Northridge | 6-5 | Fr. | G/F | Thousand Oaks, Calif. |
| Ross Rivera | Pacific | 6-7 | So. | F | Visalia, Calif. |
| Daman Starring | UC Irvine | 6-3 | Jr. | G | Las Vegas, Nev. |
| Isiah Umipig | Cal State Fullerton | 6-1 | So. | G | Federal Way, Wash. |

+ Two-time All-Big West First Team selection

^ Three-time All-Big West First Team selection

2011-12 BIG WEST PLAYER OF THE YEAR

Casper Ware, Long Beach State

2011-12 BIG WEST NEWCOMER OF THE YEAR

D. J. Seeley, Cal State Fullerton

2011-12 BIG WEST FRESHMAN OF THE YEAR

Stephan Hicks, Cal State Northridge

2011-12 BIG WEST COACH OF THE YEAR

Dan Monson, Long Beach State