

2013 FALL SPORTS PREVIEW



VANDALNATION



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Cross country



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Stephan Wiebe
Vandal Nation

Three years ago, the Idaho women's cross country team won the 2010 WAC Championship with a heavy dose of freshman talent. This season, those freshmen are now seniors on the hunt for their fourth straight WAC title and with the underclassmen coming on strong, this is the deepest Idaho team in history.

"We have, I think, the most depth we've ever had on the women's side," Idaho coach Wayne Phipps said. "All our seniors came back in really good shape, are running very, very well, our sophomores made a huge amount of improvements over their freshman year ... and then our three key freshman for this year ran very well (in the first meet)."

Leading the team is senior Hannah Kiser who won her first individual WAC Championship in 2012 after finishing second in 2011. Kiser also qualified for the NCAA Cross Country Championships in 2011, where she finished 85th overall.

Despite winning the 2012 WAC individual crown, an off-day at last year's NCAA West Regional Cross

Country Championships prevented her from qualifying in the 2012 NCAA Cross Country Championships. This season, Kiser is determined to get back to her place among the nation's best.

In addition to Kiser, seniors Alycia Butterworth, Emily Paradis and Holly Stanton have been key members of each of the past three WAC Championship teams. Another win this season would make them undefeated in WAC Championship races for their careers.

While the seniors provide skill and experience, Idaho also has a talented group of underclassmen. Rising through the ranks is sophomore Halie Raudenbush, who took the first individual win of the season for the Vandals at the Northwest Classic in Spokane on Saturday, Aug. 31.

"Halie Raudenbush also is doing really really well," Kiser said. "She's going to be able to be up there with a lot of the quicker girls than maybe she was last year."

With experience and depth on their side, the Vandals' primary opponent this season will most likely be themselves. The most important thing is to stay healthy but they also can't

get overconfident. Last year, the Vandals only beat WAC newcomer Texas-San Antonio by three points in the championships. Though the Vandals should be better than ever this season, the Roadrunners also return their four top runners from last year.

"We just have to train intelligently and make sure we're staying healthy," Phipps said. "Everybody who returned is significantly better this year than they were last year which I think is a good sign."

The Vandals have been the best squad in the WAC for several years now but they have struggled in the regional competition as a team. Last season, Idaho finished 20th in the NCAA West Regional Cross Country Championships.

"I think in the past few years, we've put so much emphasis on the conference championship and we've performed below expectations at the regional meet," Phipps said. "I'd really like to see us perform well at conference but also perform very well at the regional meet."

Stephan Wiebe can be reached at arg-sports@uidaho.edu

Men's and women's meets to watch:

Dellinger Invitational in Oregon at Eugene, Ore.

The Dellinger Invitational is the most prestigious regular season meet the Vandals will compete in all season. The competition in Oregon will be better than the Vandals will face at the WAC Championships.

Women's athlete to watch:

Hannah Kiser: The senior is the defending individual WAC champion and the leader on a Vandal team that has won the WAC Championship for three consecutive seasons. Kiser is a three-time First-Team All-WAC honoree.

Men's athlete to watch:

Cody Helbling: The junior transfer brings experience from his time as a Division I runner at BYU. Helbling ran a time of 25:44.5 at the 2010 Pre-Nationals for the Cougars. He was the top Vandal at the Clash of the Inland Northwest, Idaho's first meet of the 2013 season, in 19:04.0 to finish 12th overall.

Fast facts:

The women's cross country team is pursuing its fourth straight WAC title.

Idaho coach Wayne Phipps has led the Vandals to a record 13 conference titles between track and cross country.

Phipps first came to the Vandals as an assistant in 1995.

The men's cross country team features 10 new runners this season.

By the numbers:

3 The Idaho women's cross country team narrowly beat Texas-San Antonio by three points in 2012 to win its third straight WAC Championship. Luckily, the Vandals won't have to worry about UTSA in 2013. There are also only three teams in the WAC this year that were in the conference in 2012.

Projected WAC women's standings:

1. Idaho
2. New Mexico State
3. Grand Canyon
4. Seattle U.
5. Utah Valley
6. Cal-State Bakersfield
7. Texas-Pan American
8. Missouri-Kansas City
9. Chicago State

Projected WAC men's standings:

1. Seattle University
2. New Mexico State
3. Grand Canyon
4. Idaho
5. Utah Valley
6. Texas-Pan American
7. Chicago State
8. Missouri-Kansas City

Most quotable:

We joked around about it a little bit after their freshman year that they were going to try to win all four years.

Wayne Phipps
coach



Philip Vukelich | Vandal Nation

The Idaho men's cross country team practices on the Dan O'Brien Track and Field Complex Friday. The Vandals' next meet is the Sundodger Invitational Sept. 14 in Eugene, Ore.

Stephan Wiebe
Vandal Nation

Consisting mostly of newcomers, the Idaho men's cross country team heads into the 2013 season full of unknowns.

"On the men's side, we're a completely brand new team," Idaho coach Wayne Phipps said. "So it's exciting but there's a little bit of unpredictability associated with it as well. But an extremely talented group — the best recruiting class we've had in terms of distance runners."

While the group is talented, it's yet to showcase talent in Idaho uniforms. The only returner expected to be in Idaho's top five is sophomore Santos Vargas. Vargas finished 22nd overall at the 2012 WAC Championships as a freshman.

"It's a lot of pressure definitely but I knew this was going to happen coming in," Vargas said of being the top returner. "I took that as another opportunity. Having all these new guys on the team is definitely going to be a great new experience to have."

While most of the current Vandals are new to the program, some of them come in with some solid credentials. Junior transfer Cody Helbling, a Coeur d'Alene native, was the top Vandal in the opening meet at the Northwest Classic in Spokane. He finished 12th out of 85 participants.

"Cody Helbling, who I see becoming our team leader, ran for BYU," Phipps said. "It's been awhile since he ran

for BYU but he ran for BYU so he's already been exposed to elite Division 1 competition already."

A trio of freshmen will likely join Vargas and Helbling on the Vandals' top five this season. Two Canadians, Mickey Day from Ottawa, Ontario, and Tim Delcourt from Surrey, British Columbia, as well as Nick Boersma from Wenatchee, Wash., are all expected to contribute for Idaho right away.

Both Delcourt and Day competed in the Canadian National Cross Country Championships while in high school. Boersma was the second Vandal to finish in Idaho's opening meet.

"I feel pretty confident in their ability to handle this type of competition and I think the meets we have leading up to conference I think are going to prepare them well," Phipps said of the freshmen.

The young Idaho men's team gets its next chance to prove itself Saturday, Sept. 14, at the Sundodger Invitational in Seattle.

"That's kind of the start of our season at Sundodger," Phipps said. "We train through it, get there, see where we're at, see what adjustments we may need to make to our training and it gives us enough time to make those adjustments since we still have six to eight weeks to our season afterwards."

Stephan Wiebe can be reached at arg-sports@uidaho.edu



On the men's side, we're a completely brand new team.

Wayne Phipps, Coach



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Unfinished business

Idaho looks to avenge 2012 tourney woes

Aaron Wolfe
Vandal Nation

Last season ended for Idaho coach Debbie Buchanan with wins that had historical implications and a bittersweet elimination.

Idaho woman's volleyball, for the first time in program history, reached the WAC Championship match last year after back-to-back second place finishes. Buchanan is one win shy of 200 career wins since she took over 14 years ago. In that span she has two NCAA tournament appearances, WAC Coach of the Year honors and countless postseason and preseason honor-bred players.

Expectations are high this season for a program that's been competitive in the conference over the last three seasons. The need for production of replaceable talent garnered with strong potential would best explain the team's current situation.

Six seniors moved on last year including the alternating setting team of Ryann Carter and Jenny Feicht, who left Idaho after three years of service. Subtract second team all-WAC pick Alex Sele from the middle, three-time first team all-WAC pick Allison Walker-Baker from the outsides along with three-time starter Julia Church and it's up to Buchanan to fill in the gaps.

In terms of this season, so far so good when sophomore Meredith Coba has the ball. After sitting out a season as a red-shirt in 2011 and playing limitedly last season behind the veterans, Coba stepped up earning all-tournament team honors in the Wyoming Invitational on Aug. 30-31. She racked up 175 assists and lead her team to a .242 hitting percentage.

"She's pretty physical but she can play some ball side above the net, we're able to pass a little bit faster and run things a little bit different," Buchanan said. "I think she's just going to keep getting better and better..."

Sele is a huge loss in the middle but

junior middle blocker Alyssa Schultz returns with her consistent career hitting percentage of .325. The question is whether Schultz's partner returning senior middle blocker Taylor Wilkinson, and her WAC-quarterfinal heroics can transfer into this season as a starter. So far she has had mixed performances hitting nearly .500 or better in two matches and hitting under .200 in the two other matches of Wyoming Invitational. Wilkinson came back in the most recent match against Cal-State Northridge to hit .417 and lead the team in a narrow loss.

Schultz was held to .091 and 6 kills. Seniors Jessica Hastriter, Ashley Christman and sophomore Katelyn Peterson are now in charge of the outsides. Peterson earned WAC all-freshman team honors as a true-freshman last year and hasn't let up lately. She can dig, block and kill but has been a little error-prone with 12 against Wyoming.

Meanwhile, Hastriter seems to have improved in kills putting up career-high numbers in the category so far this season but remains a lighter hitter percentage-wise.

Defensively, the Vandals' youth tends to

show with defensive specialist Jenna Ellis returning for her second season along with freshman Terra Varney. Varney has come off as impressive and Ellis has returned a leader with the two accounting for most of the teams' digs. The digging ratio between Idaho and opposing team has been slightly lopsided though in the opponents favor. The Vandals beat Drake in digs by just one, lost in digs to Wyoming 60-74, out dug Stetson by just two and Montana State by just three. Neither Drake or Stetson won more than five matches last season.

As most recently seen against Cal State-Northridge, Friday in a narrow 3-2 loss, the Vandals were tested against tougher competition. The Matadors have recently received votes in the American Volleyball Coaches Association Top 25 poll.



I think she's just going to keep getting better and better as she gets more experience, confidence and trust between her teammates.

Debbie Buchanan,
Volleyball coach



Tony Marcolina | Vandal Nation
Redshirt freshman Ali Forde hits during practice Aug. 23. The Vandals will try to avenge a loss in last year's WAC Tournament championship game by making it back this season.

The Vandals fell to San Diego State and Northern Arizona last weekend.

In terms of championship hopes the young defense and the improving offense shows potential and is still developing.

"We're young but our youth shows and now we have to grow up with our actions and fight a little bit," Buchanan said. "I don't care if we're young we can

still win. If we stayed the same right now it's probably not going to happen because we've got some development to do some growth, mentally and physically and we can become a better team as the season goes on."

*Aaron Wolfe
can be reached at
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Matches to watch:

Thursday, Sept. 12 Boise State (3-3)

Last meeting: Nov. 22, 2010 @ WAC Tournament. Idaho def. BSU 3-2

Why it's important: The rivalry still lives on, at least in a couple of sports. Though Vandal fans might like to see this game played in Moscow, retaining this rivalry is important to both fan bases.

Player to watch: Taylor Murphey, Jr., outside hitter

— Recorded 20 kills, 40 percent hitting against Gonzaga in 3-2 win.

— Had 13 kills, 33 percent hitting against Columbia in 3-1 victory.

Thursday, Sept. 19 @ Washington State (7-0)

Last meeting: Aug. 25, 2012 @ Memorial Gym. Idaho def. WSU 3-2.

Why it's important: Idaho has "held serve" with the Pac-12 opponent in recent years and it'd prove to be the team's biggest nonconference victory should the Vandals topple the Cougars, who have yet to lose in non-conference games.

Player to watch: Ver'Leea Hardaway, Jr., middle blocker

— Named MVP of Cougar Challenge Tournament after notching seven kills in final against South Dakota.

— Recorded 17 kills and four digs in tournament victory against Montana.

Saturday, Oct. 5 vs. New Mexico State (1-5)

Last meeting: Nov. 21, 2012 @ WAC Tournament final. NMSU def. Idaho 3-1.

Why it's important: The Aggies look vulnerable a season after ousting Idaho in the WAC title game. With just one victory thus far, NMSU is still coping with the loss of 2012 WAC Player of the Year Meredith Hays, who transferred to Arkansas. The Aggies will nonetheless be Idaho's toughest conference competitor.

Player to watch: Lauren Loerch, Sr., outside hitter

— Participated in every set during 2012 season.

— Notched 10 kills, one ace, five digs and three blocks in a loss to Santa Clara.

Friday, Nov. 8 vs. Seattle U (2-6)

Last meeting: Saturday, Nov. 3 @ Memorial Gym. Idaho def. Seattle 3-1.

Why it's important: In a watered down conference, Idaho will be challenged by the Redhawks, who forced the Vandals to five and four sets in a pair of meetings last season.

Player to watch: Iris Ivanis, Fr., outside hitter

— True freshman from Croatia already leads Redhawks in kills and service aces. Has recorded 25 digs as well.

— Led team with 11 kills in 3-0 loss to Weber State on Aug. 30.

Players to watch:

Alyssa Schultz, Jr., middle blocker



Alyssa Schultz

Alyssa Schultz is an undisputed player to watch for Idaho volleyball. Schultz hit .500 against Wyoming, .480 against Stetson and .765 performance against Cal State-Northridge with 13 kills. She also has the best career hitting percentage in school history. Schultz earned 2012 all-WAC first team honors but was unable to aid her team in the 2012 WAC Tournament final due to injury. The junior is back to full health this season.

Jessica Hastriter, Jr., outside hitter



Jessica Hastriter

Junior outside hitter Jessica Hastriter has shown significant improvement from last year to earn the starting spot on the outside. Hastriter tied her career record in kills against the University of Wyoming with 16, while hitting .394 and then set a new personal record with 17 against Cal-State Northridge. She can be a little error prone but so far she seems to be at her best against the better teams on the Vandals' schedule.

Projected WAC standings



1. Idaho
2. New Mexico State
3. Cal State-Bakersfield
4. University of Texas-Pan American
5. University of Missouri-Kansas City
6. Seattle U.
7. Utah Valley
8. Grand Canyon
9. Chicago State

Most quotable



"I think we're young and some of our youth shows and now we have to grow up a little bit with our actions and fight a little bit."

— Debbie Buchanan
Coach



Tony Marcolina | Vandal Nation
Idaho sophomore setter Meredith Coba returns as one of the most experienced and talented athletes on Debbie Buchanan's 2013 roster.

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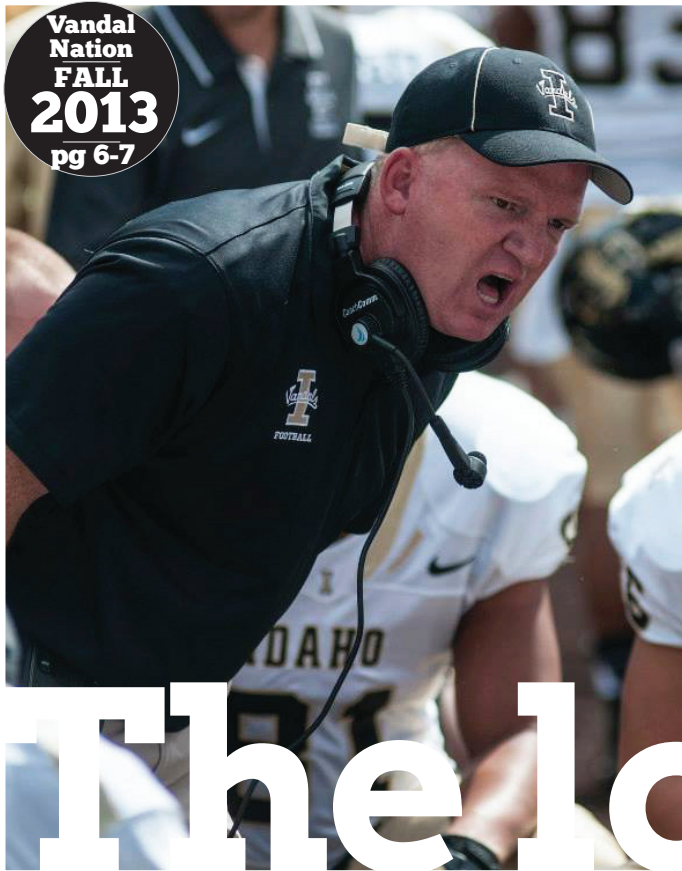
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The long, lonely road to respect

Ilya Pinchuk | Courtesy

From left to right: Idaho coach Paul Petrino barks at his team during the team's 42-10 loss to Wyoming. Starting quarterback Chad Chalich winds up to throw, while Cowboys' linebacker Lucas White pursues. Tight end Michael LaGrone pulls down a catch as North Texas' Hilbert Jackson trails behind. Vandal cornerback Delency Parham and safety Jordan Grabski knock the ball away from Wyoming's Jalen Claiborne. The Vandals, 0-2 thus far, look to rebound from losses to North Texas and Wyoming when they host 2013 Discover Orange Bowl contender Northern Illinois and dual-threat quarterback Jordan Lynch.

Sean Kramer
Vandal Nation

The long road is something Idaho coach Paul Petrino is used to taking, and one that he probably prefers. It's the road the Montana native and coach's son took to his first head coaching position after two decades of living the game as an assistant. It's the road he took back to Moscow, where his assistant coaching career took off in 1992 under then head coach John L. Smith.

He always knew he would be a head coach, and has always wanted to be one. He even admitted to thinking of himself as one when he was an assistant. There were jobs Petrino was offered but didn't take and jobs he pursued but didn't get. It was last December when Petrino said he finally found the right fit, the opportunity to return to the Pacific Northwest and a place he feels comfortable – head coach of the Idaho Vandals.

Now Petrino has another long road ahead of him, the one to make Idaho a respectable FBS football program. The first two weeks of the season have shown just how long of a road this could be. Petrino is 0-2 thus far, and has been outscored 82-16 in losses at

North Texas and Wyoming.

"There's nothing wrong with getting knocked on your butt, the key is to get up and fight," Petrino said. "There's no one out there who hasn't had that happen to them before. If that hasn't happened then they haven't competed very much."

Those words have rang true for Idaho. Effort doesn't seem to be the problem, as evidenced by Idaho's two scoring drives late in the fourth quarter at Wyoming. The problems have come down to execution, experience and just a lack of talent.

At least 17 players who have never played a Division I snap prior to this season have played significant roles for Idaho in its first two games.

"That's not making excuses, a couple of them played like it," Petrino said. "We just have to get out there and get better every week. I said it at the beginning of the year, there's going to be some games where we go out there and we're going to take our lumps."

He's completely overhauled the quarterback position since arriving on campus — one that has been a point of discussion since Nathan Enderle's graduation after the 2010 season. Red-shirt freshman Chad Chalich has taken the reigns as the starter with junior college transfer Josh McCain also playing meaningful snaps the first two weeks. Senior Taylor Davis, who started the season finale in 2012, is the third stringer. Red-shirt freshman Austin DeCoud moved to linebacker and junior college transfer Anthony Neyer flamed out of the program after a poor spring showing.

Chalich earned the job through the spring and the fall by displaying a respectable work ethic, an understanding of the offense and most of all toughness.

"I think our players have a high level of respect for Chad, to be honest," offensive coordinator Kris Cinkovich said. "Last spring when he was hit all the time when the quarterbacks were live forever I really think

that he developed a lot of respect from his teammates and frankly he developed a lot of toughness." "Obviously, he's our quarterback," Cinkovich added.

The offense, also new, incorporates a read-option attack that puts split-second decision making in the hands of the quarterbacks, asking them to make plays with their legs. On top of taking 12 sacks between the two of them, McCain and Chalich have combined for 32 rushing attempts the first two games – only five fewer attempts than all the running backs combined. Flashes of brilliance have been evident. Chalich has 412 yards passing on a 69 percent completion clip, while McCain is averaging 6.1 yards-per-attempt coming in as a running playmaker. Those same flashes have yet to turn into consistent points, however, with untimely mistakes at inopportune times.

"Our football intelligence right now is not very high," Petrino said. "And that's coaching, we have to get a lot better at coaching our guys and getting them to understand what they're doing. There's some young guys but that stuff has to stop. We can't keep making silly stupid mis-

takes and that was one of them." The offensive progression is a learning experience for all 11 players on the field. Idaho returns three starters from last season's offensive line. The Vandals use a converted tackle at strong guard and a converted defensive lineman at strong tackle.

The running back and wide receiver positions have seen seven contributors get their feet wet and get their first taste of FBS football. While speed and ability have been abundant, experience and being able to catch up to the speed of the game haven't. Petrino has lauded his depth at the skill positions throughout the fall and his assistants have been hands-on in trying to develop the inexperience into production on the field.

"It's a real hands-on approach and I like that, because in the meeting room we're not just sitting around taking notes all day," redshirt freshman wide receiver Deon Watson said. "We are taking notes but we're also getting up, learning techniques, actually walking through stuff. That's why you don't wear flip flops to meetings, because you have to be prepared to get up and actually do some movement."

The inexperienced defense, powered by numerous junior college transfers,

Turning defense into an art

New Idaho defensive coordinator Ronnie Lee can remember his fondest days on the Palouse. It was 1986 when the Washington State defensive back led the Pac-10 Conference in forced fumbles.

If the ball-carrier was hanging the ball out, Lee would punch it out. If the ball-carrier was hanging on to it, Lee would find another way to knock it out. "There's always a way to get the ball out. If you hit a person hard enough they're going to forget about the ball," Lee said.

Creating turnovers, getting off the field on third down and stopping the run are defensive points of emphasis Lee said the Vandals have been working toward since the first day the coaching staff arrived in Moscow.

The problem for Lee is the number of starters he's been tasked with replacing on defense. All but one player in the back seven have left the program, along with now NFL defensive end Benson Mayowa, who left a void on the defensive line.

The inexperienced defense, powered by numerous junior college transfers,

showed promise Saturday at Wyoming. Idaho forced a potent Cowboys offense to punt on its first four possessions before an Idaho turnover set up the Cowboys 42 yards away from the end zone, ultimately giving them their first touchdown.

"I feel like our energy was up, we had a lot of passion and energy coming out of the locker room. As the game went on it drifted away," junior linebacker Eric Tuipulotu said.

The hope on defense will rely on the development of chemistry and the ability to create turnovers as the season progresses. The entire linebacking corps is made up of junior college transfers who have little experience playing Division I ball prior to 2013. The secondary is equally inexperienced with only sophomore cornerbacks Jayshawn Jordan and Solomon Dixon and senior safety Trey Williams bringing experience from 2012.

The inexperience has culminated in Idaho giving up an average of 577 yards its first two games.

"The biggest thing we're trying to do is continue to create chemistry from the front end to the back, and doing that is developing depth as well, because the scheme is going to fit the players, not the other way around," Lee said.

For the scheme to work it will be based around the more experienced defensive line, which Petrino has called one of the strongest units on the team. With returners Maxx Forde, Quinton Bradley and QuayShawne Buckley, the defensive front can give Idaho a chance to create some havoc. Outside linebacker Marc Millan, a strong pass-rusher, led the defense with two sacks Saturday at Wyoming. The team wasn't able to manage a single sack at North Texas.

Every Sunday night after Saturday games the team will scrimmage for an hour, with underclassmen sticking around for an additional hour of practice. "That's all about the future, that's all about getting better," Petrino said. "That's all about being Sun Belt Champions someday."

"The one thing we believe and preach on defense is no excuses and no explanation," Lee said. "...you can't go out there and worry about last week's game, make improvement and get ready for the next one."

The long road and the vision

On the heels of a sobering 40-6 defeat at North Texas, Petrino re-affirmed his goals with the program. An FBS Independent in 2013, the Vandals have no conference championship to play for — only an outside shot at a bowl bid to the Famous Idaho Potato Bowl.

The Vandal football program will find itself in the Sun Belt Conference in 2014 with an opportunity to earn a variety of bowl bids, in addition to a conference championship.

Sean Kramer can be reached at arg-sports@uidaho.edu



There's nothing wrong with getting knocked on your butt, the key is to get up and fight

Paul Petrino, coach



The biggest thing we're trying to do is continue to create chemistry from the front end to the back, and doing that is developing depth as well, because the scheme is going to fit the players, not the other way around.

Ronnie Lee defensive coordinator



Predicted scores:

**Ricky Clark —
Argonaut web
manager**



Vs. Northern
Illinois: 49-14
Northern Ill.

@ Washington
State: 38-17
Wash. St.

Vs. Temple:

21-14 Temple

Vs. Fresno State: 42-7 Fresno St.

@ Arkansas State: 49-17 Ark. St.

@ Mississippi: 52-21 Ole Miss.

Vs. Texas State: 31-28 Idaho

Vs. Old Dominion: 35-32 Idaho

@ Florida State: 60-10 Florida St.

@ New Mexico State: 28-24 NMSU

Overall: 3-9

Even though this team has potential, they are still a year or two away from going 6-6 and competing for a bowl game — maybe.

**Sean Kramer — Vandal
Nation blog manager**



Vs. Northern Illinois:
42-14 Northern Ill.

@ Washington State:
38-16 Wash. St.

Vs. Temple: 20-17
Idaho

Vs. Fresno State: 34-17 Fresno St.

@ Arkansas State: 41-14 Ark. St.

@ Ole Miss: 51-10 Ole Miss.

Vs. Texas State: 24-17 Texas St.

Vs. Old Dominion: 28-17 Old Dominion

@ Florida State: 63-7 Florida St.

@ New Mexico State: 24-14 Idaho

Overall: 2-10

One day, Idaho will be in another bowl game. That day will not be in 2013. It's all about avoiding the Tyrone Willingham this year.

**Stephan Wiebe — Sports
editor**



Vs. Northern Illinois:
44-14 Northern Ill.

@ Washington State:
40-6 Wash. St.

Vs. Temple: 24-21
Idaho

Vs. Fresno State: 52-17 Fresno St.

@ Arkansas State: 35-21 Ark. St.

@ Mississippi: 39-17 Ole Miss.

Vs. Texas State: 34-12 Texas St.

Vs. Old Dominion: 35-32 Idaho

@ Florida State: 62-14 Florida St.

@ New Mexico State: 31-17 Idaho

Overall: 3-9

The Vandals get their act together by late September to pull out the first of the season. The Wiebe beard will be halfway to full length at that point.

**Theo Lawson — Editor-
in-chief**



Vs. Northern Illinois:
45-14 Northern Ill.

@ Washington State:
35-10 Wash. St.

Vs. Temple: 28-20
Temple

Vs. Fresno State: 42-14 Fresno St.

@ Arkansas State: 32-17 Ark. St.

@ Mississippi: 45-7 Ole Miss.

Vs. Texas State: 40-21 Texas St.

Vs. Old Dominion: 28-25 Idaho

@ Florida State: 50-10 Florida St.

@ New Mexico State: 24-17 Idaho

Overall: 2-10

Idaho will spend more time wishing they were ringing the bell than actually doing it. But don't panic — the grind will pay off in years to come.

TACKLE

Your hunger ...



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Games to watch:

**Saturday, Sept. 21 @
Washington State**

Why it's important: This game has been the "Battle of the Palouse" in the past and this is the first game between the two teams since 2007.

Player to watch: Andrew Furney, Sr., kicker

They call Washington State "Kicker U" for a reason. Furney, a senior from Burlington, Wash., is one of the team leaders and has a strong leg. His career long is 60 yards.

Last meeting: Saturday, Sept. 15, 2007. WSU def. Idaho 45-28

**Saturday, Nov. 30 @
New Mexico State**

Why it's important: New Mexico State is a team that we have played every year since 2005. The Aggies are also joining Idaho in the Sun Belt in 2014 and were also Idaho's only victory last season.

Player to Watch: Andrew McDonald, Sr., quarterback

McDonald is a dual-threat quarterback. While leading the team in passing, he is also the team leader in rushing.

Last meeting: Saturday, Oct. 6, 2012. Idaho def. NMSU 26-18.

OFFENSE

Running back

1. Kris Olugbode
2. Richard Montgomery
3. Jerrel Brown
4. James Baker

It's running back by committee, hottest hand and best match-up for opposing defenses will get the carries.

Quarterback

1. Chad Chalich
2. Josh McCain

Chalich is the starter but Petrino and Co. will look to use McCain and his legs in creative ways each week.

Wide receiver

1. Najee Lovett
2. Dezmon Epps
3. Deon Watson
4. Roman Runner
5. Trent Cowan

Receiver depth highlighted by speed from Lovett and Epps. Idaho has a plethora of names who could breakout behind those two.

Fullback

1. Jake Manley.
 2. Jake Manley.
- You get the picture here.

Tight end

1. Michael LaGrone
2. Clayton Homme
3. Jared Klingenberg

Tight end depth highlighted by the two seniors, LaGrone heavily involved in both Idaho touch-down drives this year.

Offensive line

Right to left: WT Cody Elenz, WG Dallas Sandberg, C Mike Marboe, SG Nick Van Rotz, ST Jesse Davis

Back-ups: WT Calvin White, WG Larry Dugan, C Spencer Beale, SG Sione Maile, ST Calvin White

Defensive line

Right to left: DE Maxx Forde, DT Ryan Edwards, DT Vince Keener, DE Quinton Bradley

Back-ups: DE Anthony Rice, DT Quayshawne Buckley

Special Teams

Kicker and Punter



Austin Rehkow

Back-up kicker: Ryan Bordner
Back-up punter: Will Schmidt

Punt returner



Najee Lovett

Back-up: Dezmon Epps

Kick returners



Richard Montgomery



Dezmon Epps

Back-up: Najee Lovett

Cornerback

1. Solomon Dixon
2. Delency Parham
3. Jayshawn Jordan
4. Christian Whitehead

Secondary depth is an area of concern for Idaho. Sophomore Solomon Dixon leads the way.

Linebackers

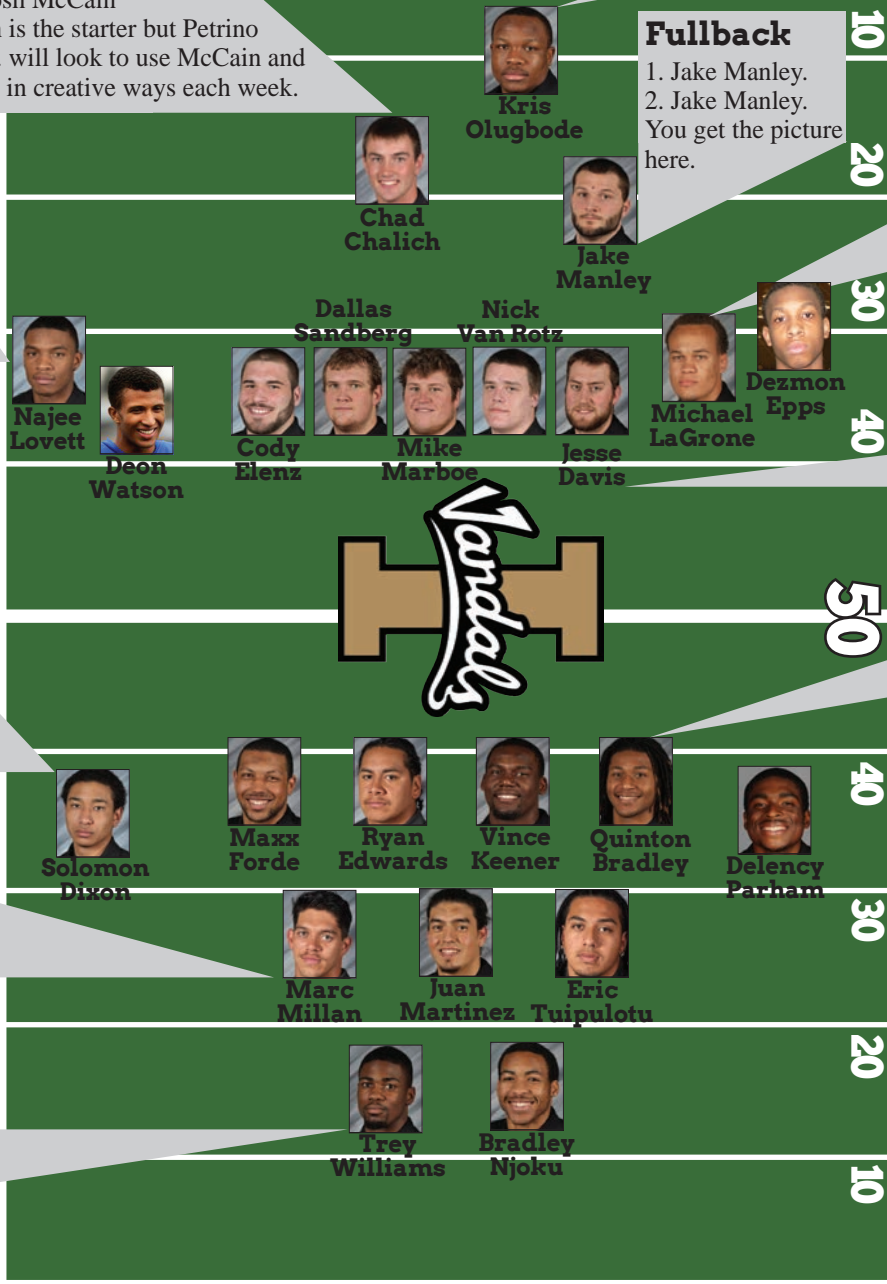
SLB: Marc Millan
MLB: Juan Martinez
WLB: Eric Tuipulotu

Back ups: SLB: Broc Westlake, MLB: Matt Willis, SLB: James Randall

Junior college transfers replace three starters from last year

Safety

Strong safety: Bradley Njoku
Free safety: Trey Williams
Back-ups: SS Tom Hennessey, FS Jordan Grabski



DEFENSE

New faces, new hopes

Pete Showler's much-changed roster tries to fit the mold, works toward retaining a winning

Curtis Ginnetti
Vandal Nation

Coming off of a season featuring his deepest team in program history, Idaho soccer coach Pete Showler faced the difficult task of replacing half of his roster for the 2013 season after graduating 10 seniors.

The young additions and changing team dynamic

have proven to be a hurdle for the program early in the season, but Showler and the team as a whole are confident that they are coming together and will continue the legacy of winning that Showler has brought over his nine years as coach.

Showler said that coming into the recruiting season with half of his

roster open was actually a strength. He was able to recruit some of the nation's top players from top teams such as goalkeeper Torell Stewart from Highlands Ranch, Colo., where she helped her team become second in the nation.

"A lot more players are making decisions based on being able to start at University of Idaho rather than go somewhere else where they will have to redshirt and sit on the bench for a year or maybe two," Showler said.

It was this proactive attitude combined with solid technical skills that would make a good fit with the team that Showler was looking for when recruiting last year. Showler demands a lot from his athletes academically and he needed recruits who could fit the mold.

"We have a team grade point average of 3.58, which is right up there in the top five percent of all Division I schools in the nation," Showler said. "It is important that they are students first because most of these women will not go on to play after school."

It's not all about the grades for the team, however. They still need to perform on the pitch. So when the experienced team of 2012 graduated 10 players, including their top offensive and defensive players, Showler needed some athletes to perform on the same level and mesh well with the older players on his team.

To help with the transi-



Ilya Pinchuk | Courtesy

Idaho senior defender Chelsie Breen reacts to heading the ball in Idaho's exhibition tie with Oklahoma. The 0-5 Vandals host Eastern Washington Friday.

tion, the team added to their coaching staff directly from the team itself. Last year's starting forward, Chelsea Small, graduated from Idaho but has returned as a volunteer assistant coach.

"As a coach I have been able to pass my knowledge along and the people look up to me a lot more," Small said.

For Small, the transition from player to coach has been a smooth one. The players respect her on the field as a coach and value the input that she has been able to bring to the staff. She said the returning players, as well as the new ones, know she is there to coach them and turn them into a better team. In addition, off the field she is able to reconnect with the

returning players.

Showler also hired Laura Jackson, a former soccer player at Iona College and Syracuse as an assistant coach in July. It is Jackson's primary job to work with the young goalkeepers and like Small, she has a lot to add to the team being a recent player herself.

"She brings a different perspective of where she played in terms of the conferences and she is still just removed from the player side so she has the mind set of still analyzing the game both from the goalkeepers side and as a coach," Showler said.

With the new additions to the roster and the coaching staff, the Vandal soccer team is looking to

build around the successful formula that has proven itself in the past and continue the success this year.

In the preseason WAC Coaches Poll, the consensus was that the Vandals would finish second in the conference standings. Seattle U., one of just three returning WAC squads, is expected to finish atop the standings.

The hope and expectations are high for the team as it has come together in the past weeks. Idaho plays a pair of key non-conference matches at Guy Wicks Field against Eastern Washington on Friday and a Sunday match against UNLV.

Curtis Ginnetti can be reached at arg-sports@uidaho.edu

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Ilya Pinchuk | Courtesy

Idaho's Kavita Battan jockeys for the ball in the Vandals' sole exhibition game of the 2013 season, a 0-0 Aug. 15 tie with Oklahoma. Battan, a freshman from Vancouver, Wash., is one of a number of underclassmen who have seen extensive minutes during the team's first five matches. Still, the Vandals have yet to claim a victory during the 2013 campaign and have been outscored by a 19-3 margin in five nonconference losses.

Games to watch:

Friday, Sept., 27 vs. New Mexico State (2-4)

Last Meeting: Oct. 28, 2012. Idaho def. New Mexico State (3-1)

Why it's important: The Vandals beat New Mexico State in the last game of the 2012 season. The Aggies are one of only two returning WAC sides.

Player to watch: Mary Kate Koziol, Jr., midfielder

—Koziol has started all six games for New Mexico State this season.

—She is tied for top scorer for New Mexico State with two goals and one assist.

Sunday, Sept. 29 vs. Missouri-Kansas City (3-2-1)

This is the first meeting between the two teams.

Why it's important: Kansas City currently leads the WAC standings and is one of two teams in the WAC to have a winning record. This would be a statement victory for the young, struggling Vandal team in need of a confidence boost.

Player to watch: Sarah Shaughnessy, Sr., defender

—Shaughnessy is currently anchoring the defense of the team that is first in the WAC standings.

—She played in all 19 games last season, including 18 starts. This season she has played in all six games.

Sunday, Nov. 3 vs. Seattle U. (2-1-2)


Last Meeting: Oct. 7, 2012. Seattle def. Idaho 5-1

Why it's important: Seattle was the preseason No. 1 in the WAC standings. This game is a preparation test should the Vandals meet the Redhawks in the WAC Tournament. Not to mention that coach Pete Showler and Idaho will try to avenge a pair of losses to Seattle U. a season ago.

Player to watch: Stephanie Verdoia, Jr., forward

—Verdoia is the leading scorer on the Redhawks team this season.


—In five games, Verdoia has two goals and one assist. She also leads the team in shots with 10.



Most quotable:

"Taking care of everything down to the sunscreen, wearing SPF 50."

Mary Condon, senior defender on taking care of details



Projected WAC Standings

1. Seattle U.
2. Missouri-Kansas City
3. New Mexico State
4. Idaho
5. Cal State-Bakersfield
6. Utah Valley
7. Grand Canyon



Curtis Ginnetti, Tony Marcolina, Philip Vukelich | Vandal Nation
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