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Champion Nighthawks take home top all-GNAC accolades

PORTLAND, Ore. – Four of the five major awards for the 2026 Great Northwest Athletic Conference baseball season went to regular-season champion Northwest Nazarene, as the all-conference team was announced on Tuesday.

The Nighthawks, who went 25-7 in league play to win the championship title, are led by GNAC Coach of the Year **Joe Schaefer**. Utility player **Carter Walsh** was named the GNAC Player of the Year, left-hander **Corbin Talley** was tabbed GNAC Pitcher of the Year and outfielder **Kyle Becker** was selected as GNAC Newcomer of the Year. The other top award of GNAC Freshman of the Year went to Montana State Billings starting pitcher **Cade Queen**.

The Nighthawks, Yellowjackets and Western Oregon Wolves will square off at the upcoming 2026 GNAC Baseball Championships, which kick off on Thursday afternoon in Nampa, Idaho. Complete tournament information [can be found online here](#).

- Player of the Year: [Carter Walsh, Northwest Nazarene](#)
- Pitcher of the Year: [Corbin Talley, Northwest Nazarene](#)
- Newcomer of the Year: [Kyle Becker, Northwest Nazarene](#)
- Freshman of the Year: [Cade Queen, Montana State Billings](#)
- Coach of the Year: [Joe Schaefer, Northwest Nazarene](#) (3rd of career)

First-Team All-Conference

Name	School	Position	Ht.	Yr.	Hometown (Previous School)
* Corbin Talley	Northwest Nazarene	SP	6-4	SR	Jones, OK (Northwestern State)
* Cade Queen	Montana State Billings	SP	6-2	FR	Powell, WY (Powell)
*! Brennen Chappell	Montana State Billings	SP	6-2	SR	Kimberly, ID (Coll. of Southern Idaho)
*% Sam Coxen	Montana State Billings	SP	6-2	SO	Granite Bay, CA (Del Oro)
\$! Wade Duncan	Northwest Nazarene	RP	6-0	JR	Rancho Cucamonga, CA (Los Osos)
* Ethan Buckley	Central Washington	C	6-0	JR	Cape Town, South Africa (Gonzaga)
+<* Kaleb Karpstein	Northwest Nazarene	1B	6-0	SR	Bend, OR (Bend Senior)
\$\$^ Jack Nehler	Montana State Billings	2B	6-0	SR	Gresham, OR (Gresham)
* Andre Garza	Central Washington	3B	5-10	JR	Othello, WA (Wenatchee Valley Coll.)
* Chris Arce	Western Oregon	SS	5-10	JR	Inglewood, CA (Canada Coll.)
* Kyle Becker	Northwest Nazarene	OF	6-1	JR	San Diego, CA (Nevada)
*! Adrian Arechiga	Northwest Nazarene	OF	5-11	SR	Jurupa Valley, CA (Riverside CC)
* Noah Albanese	Saint Martin’s	OF	6-0	JR	Kenmore, WA (Edmonds CC)
* Parker Sobesiak	Northwest Nazarene	OF	5-10	JR	Rancho Cucamonga, CA (Riverside CC)
* Kaden Bertram	Montana State Billings	DH	6-3	SR	Beaverton, OR (Pierce Coll.)
*#! Carter Walsh	Northwest Nazarene	UTL	5-9	JR	Boise, ID (Timberline)

* - Unanimous Selection | + - 2025 First-Team All-GNAC | % - 2025 Second-Team All-GNAC | ! - 2025 Honorable Mention All-GNAC |
 \$ - 2024 First-Team All-GNAC | # - 2024 Second-Team All-GNAC | @ - 2024 Honorable Mention All-GNAC | < - 2023 Second-Team All-GNAC
 ^ - 2023 Honorable Mention All-GNAC

Second-Team All-Conference

Name	School	Position	Ht.	Yr.	Hometown (Previous School)
Dillon Eden	Northwest Nazarene	SP	6-3	SR	Elko, NV (Treasure Valley CC)
Ayden Holker	Western Oregon	SP	6-5	JR	Rancho Cucamonga, CA (Los Osos)
Garet Hagy	Central Washington	SP	6-1	SR	Ephrata, WA (Wenatchee Valley Coll.)
Caleb Boswell	Northwest Nazarene	C	5-11	JR	Odessa, TX (Midland Coll.)
Kelton Tom	Saint Martin's	C	5-10	SR	Wailuku, HI (Kamehameha – Maui)
Jason Wright	Montana State Billings	1B	6-0	SR	San Diego, CA (Saddleback CC)
< Alohi Arecchi	Saint Martin's	2B	5-6	SR	Haleiwa, HI (Damien Memorial)
Liam Herrera	Northwest Nazarene	3B	5-11	JR	San Marcos, CA (San Marcos)
% Ryker Fortier	Montana State Billings	SS	6-0	SR	Ellensburg, WA (Bellevue Coll.)
Logan Blank	Central Washington	OF	6-0	SR	Bellevue, WA (Edmonds Coll.)
River Smith	Montana State Billings	OF	6-3	SR	Livingston, MT (Wenatchee Valley Coll.)
Nick Reed	Montana State Billings	OF	6-3	FR	San Diego, CA (Rancho Bernardo)
Coleman Parry	Northwest Nazarene	DH	5-10	JR	American Fork, UT (Miles CC)
! Zane Garvey	Western Oregon	UTL	6-4	SO	Tualatin, OR (Tualatin)

Honorable Mention All-Conference

Name	School	Position	Ht.	Yr.	Hometown (Previous School)
Austin Cupic	Central Washington	SP	6-2	JR	Mercer Island, WA (San Francisco)
Conrad Henkel	Central Washington	OF	6-0	JR	Maple Valley, WA (Wenatchee Valley Coll.)
Kaiden Hernandez	Central Washington	SS	5-11	JR	Las Vegas, NV (Clark Coll.)
Ethan Swenson	Central Washington	1B	6-8	SO	Arlington, WA (Pacific)
Nate McDonald	Montana State Billings	3B	6-0	SO	Billings, MT (Billings West)
%@ Gavin Brubaker	Northwest Nazarene	SS	6-0	JR	Lakewood, WA (Curtis)
! Evan Nicol	Saint Martin's	1B	6-5	JR	Olympia, WA (Olympia)
Hudson Normand	Saint Martin's	SP	6-0	SO	Happy Valley, OR (Centralia Coll.)
Nikki Scott II	Saint Martin's	SP	5-9	SR	Vancouver, WA (Heritage)
Blaze Wong	Saint Martin's	SP	6-2	SR	Mililani, HI (Leilehua)
Benny Nazario	Western Oregon	2B	5-10	SR	San Pablo, CA (Coll. of Marin)

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\$ - 2024 First-Team All-GNAC | # - 2024 Second-Team All-GNAC | @ - 2024 Honorable Mention All-GNAC | < - 2023 Second-Team All-GNAC

^ - 2023 Honorable Mention All-GNAC

Helping lead Northwest Nazarene to its third consecutive GNAC regular-season title and fifth overall, Walsh was among the league's top players all season long. He posted an on-base plus slugging percentage of .994 while leading the GNAC with 18 doubles and driving in 43 runs. Playing all over the diamond for NNU, Walsh hit .380 while reaching base at a clip of .423 and leading the conference with 34 stolen bases. In his three seasons with the Nighthawks, Walsh's 82-career stolen bases are second-most in GNAC history. Primarily hitting in the leadoff or second spots in the NNU lineup this spring, Walsh was the team's table setter with his 78 total hits leading the GNAC and his 52 runs scored ranking second in the league. He added five home runs and three triples, bringing his slugging percentage through 50 games played to .571.

While the Nighthawks have enjoyed tremendous team success of late, winning all five of their regular-season crowns in the last six years, the league's top player award has been an elusive one. Walsh became the third Nighthawk all-time to garner the honor and the first since Tyler Davis and Billy King went back-to-back in 2016 and 2017. He also became just the fourth player in league history to win both the GNAC Freshman of the Year (2024) and GNAC Player of the Year awards, joining Connor McCord of Western Oregon (2017/2021), Jamie Nilsen of Central Washington (2005/2007 & 2008) and Greg McCarthy of WOU (2002/2005). A unanimous first-team selection, the Boise, Idaho native earned his third-career all-conference accolade, after taking home second-team in 2024 and honorable mention last spring.

For as impactful as Walsh was offensively in the NNU lineup, Talley was just as dominant on the mound to grab the league's top pitcher honor in his first season with the Nighthawks. A transfer from Northwestern State in Louisiana and a native of Jones, Okla., Talley was mostly untouchable throughout the regular season. He posted a league-leading 2.27 earned run average and led the GNAC in strikeouts with 90 and opponents' batting average at .212. Pitching in the seven-inning second game of doubleheaders, Talley logged four complete games, three shutouts and carries a perfect 10-0 record through his 12 starts thus far.

Evidence of Talley's sustained success were three GNAC Pitcher of the Week honors, coming during a stretch of six starts in which he surrendered just two earned runs across 36 1/3 innings pitched. In a pair of shutouts during that span, he had his two highest

strikeout totals of the season with 11 against Saint Martin's on April 17 and 10 against Montana State Billings on March 20. Talley became the fourth Nighthawk to win GNAC Pitcher of the Year honors with all coming in the last four seasons. He joined Cole Calnon (2025), Kyle Ethridge (2024) and Ty Pohlman (2023) to keep the streak of bringing the league's best pitcher plaque to Nampa alive.

It didn't take long for University of Nevada transfer and San Diego native Becker to make an impact, as he went 4-for-6 with two steals, two RBIs and three runs scored in his very first game of the season on Jan. 30. Becker never stopped hitting, finishing the regular season third in the conference with a batting average of .388 while reaching base at .458 and slugging .599. The Nighthawks' primary rightfielder, Becker added 15 doubles and five home runs while driving in 35 hitting in the middle of the lineup. His impressive opener was the first of 16 multi-hit games during the regular season, and his 53 runs scored were most by any GNAC player in 2026. It is the second year in-a-row and fifth time overall that NNU has taken home the GNAC Newcomer of the Year honor. Becker joined Ernesto Lugo-Canchola (2025), Grant Kerry (2021), Tyler Davis (2015) and Nick Ray (2007) among the previous award winners from his school.

Leading his team to an overall record of 35-15, Schaefer piloted the Nighthawks to yet another regular-season crown (25-7) with a dominant run through the league schedule. It was the third year in-a-row that NNU lost fewer than 10 GNAC contests, and it clinched the crown in the penultimate week of the regular season. Working on his eighth season in charge in Nampa, Schaefer continued to add to his already impressive resume as he upped his NNU career record to 240-139 (.633) and his conference record to 161-68 (.703) He ranks fourth all-time among GNAC coaches in total conference wins and his GNAC winning percentage of .703 is third-best ever by a coach in the conference, behind Jeremiah Robbins of Western Oregon at .833 (2006-12) and Terry Baumgartner of WOU at .802 (2002-05). He also joined Robbins and current WOU head coach **Kellen Walker** in becoming the third man in conference history to win five or more regular-season titles. It was his third GNAC Coach of the Year honor since taking charge in 2019. Schaefer's Nighthawks have their sights set on qualifying for another NCAA tournament, appearing at No. 5 in last week's regional rankings. NNU is coming off a magical run to the NCAA Division II World Series in 2025, as Schaefer led his team one game shy of qualifying for the national championship finals last spring.

For the GNAC runner-up Yellowjackets, Queen was among the top performers on the mound. A first year from Powell, Wyo., the right-hander tossed 54 1/3 innings while striking out 62 hitters and holding an ERA of 4.31 during the regular season. Similar to Talley, Queen enjoyed a stretch of dominance during the campaign in which he allowed three total earned runs in 18 innings across three starts. His season high of 11 strikeouts came in a nine-inning, complete-game victory over Northwest Nazarene on March 21, and he went 4-2 across 11 total starts on the season. Queen also made an impact with his bat, hitting three home runs in 41 trips to the plate across 21 games played in the field. Queen is the third player in MSUB history to be named GNAC Freshman of the Year, joining teammate **Sam Coxen** (2025) and Cooper Dulich (2022) on the short list.