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Big Sky Announces Women's Basketball All-Conference Team and Award Winners

OGDEN, Utah (March 10) - The Big Sky Conference has announced the Women's Basketball All-Conference team and individual award winners for the 2008-09 season. The awards were decided following a vote by the league's nine head coaches.

Montana's Mandy Morales became just the fifth player in Big Sky history to earn first-team accolades all four years of her career. The senior was a unanimous selection to the first team, along with Portland State's Kelsey Kahle and Claire Faucher. Morales and Faucher were also unanimous first-team selections in 2007-08.

Morales, a three-time honorable mention All-American, was named the Big Sky's Most Valuable Player for the second time. The 5-9 guard averaged 16.7 points per game overall and 18.3 in league play to help the Lady Griz to their 19th overall and third-straight outright conference title. She leads the Big Sky with an .837 free-throw percentage and ranks fourth in assists per game (4.50) and field goal percentage (.480). Morales ranks in the top 20 in almost every other statistical category.

The native of Billings, Mont., was named the Big Sky Player of the Week five times in 2008-09. On Jan. 29, she scored 34 points against Portland State to post the best single-game mark in the Big Sky this season. Morales was named the MVP at last year's tournament and also garnered regular-season MVP honors in 2006-07. She shared the Outstanding Freshman Award with Portland State's Kahle in 2005-06.

Kahle, a 5-10 forward, was tabbed the Defensive Player of the Year and received first-team honors for the third time in her career with the Vikings. She was an all around threat as she led second-place Portland State in scoring (16.8 ppg) and rebounding (6.3 rpg). Kahle's scoring average is the best in the Big Sky and she also ranks second in field goal percentage with .519.

The senior became Portland State's all-time leading scorer this season with 1,991 career points, which ranks third in the conference record books. She also moved into first on the Big Sky's all-time free throws made list with 584. Kahle is currently 11th on the conference's all-time rebounding list with 850 career boards. She earned Player of the Week honors twice this season.

Weber State's Sarah Conner garnered Top Newcomer honors for 2008-09, after averaging 9.3 points, 2.3 assists and 1.3 steals per contest. The junior transfer, from Northeastern Junior College, saw action in 28 games this season and started 12 for the Wildcats. Conner shot .780 from the free-throw line and .338 from the field this season.

Montana State's Katie Bussey was named this year's Outstanding Freshman. The 5-9 guard saw considerable playing time in her freshman campaign, averaging 24.4 minutes. She scored 10.6 points per game and shot 76.7 percent from the foul line to help the Bobcats to their third-place finish.

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2008-09 Big Sky Women's All-Conference Team

First Team

<u>Player, School</u>	<u>Year</u>	<u>Position</u>	<u>Hometown</u>
Mandy Morales, Montana#*** MVP	Senior	Guard	Billings, Mont.
Kelsey Kahle, Portland State#**	Senior	Forward	Aurora, Ore.
Claire Faucher, Portland State#*	Junior	Guard	Yakima, Wash.
Erica Perry, Montana State	Junior	Guard	Lynwood, Calif.
Sonya Rogers, Montana	Senior	Guard	Lewistown, Mont.
Michelle Grohs, Idaho State	Senior	Forward	Salmon, Idaho

Second Team

<u>Player, School</u>	<u>Year</u>	<u>Position</u>	<u>Hometown</u>
Charday Hunt, Sacramento State	Junior	Guard	Portland, Ore.
Sade Cunningham, Northern Arizona*	Senior	Guard	Lynwood, Calif.
Courtney Stoermer, Northern Colorado	Sophomore	Guard	Coralville, Iowa
Nubia Garcia, Montana State	Senior	Forward	Orem, Utah
Britney Lohman, Montana*	Senior	Forward	Bozeman, Mont.
Jenna Brown, Idaho State	Senior	Guard	West Linn, Ore.

*Number of previous All-Conference selections; #Unanimous selection

Honorable Mention: Julie Piper, Eastern Washington; Sarah Ena, Montana; Kelli Valentine, Portland State; Caitlin Anderson, Weber State

Most Valuable Player: Mandy Morales, Sr., Montana

Defensive Player of the Year: Kelsey Kahle, Sr., Portland State

Top Newcomer: Sarah Conner, Jr., Weber State

Outstanding Freshman: Katie Bussey, Montana State