

MEN'S WATER POLO

Ends Season on Historic High

In front of screaming Tiger fans who had come by the busloads, No. 1-ranked Pacific battled five-time defending champion USC for the NCAA title in an overtime thriller in December.

While the Tigers ultimately settled for the National Runner Up trophy and the Trojans took home the title, Pacific had shattered the myth that the championship was an entitlement of the four historic powers (USC, UCLA, Stanford and Cal) in men's water polo.

In Pacific's (23–5) historic showing in the NCAA National Championship game, Balazs Erdelyi '14 scored seven goals, a championship game modern-era record, while goalkeeper Alex Malkis '14 made 17 saves in the matchup with USC.

Pacific spent virtually the entire season ranked in the top three and earned the No. 1 ranking for the first time in program history, holding the top spot for a quarter of the season. The talk of the water polo



The campus celebrated men's water polo after their return from the NCAA Championships

community, Pacific's season was captivating, and the Tigers drew inspiration from their now larger and vocal fan base.

Behind the incredible fan turnout at home in the regular season, Pacific won its first MPSF regular season title.

"The crowd was huge for us, I don't even know if there were (other) fans, I just heard our fans," Malkis said following the Tigers' semifinal win over host Stanford.

With program records for most wins, fewest losses and deepest NCAA run—the Tigers' 1993 NCAA squad placed fifth—the team will go down as one of the best in Pacific athletics history.

The squad joins Pacific women's volleyball as the only Tigers' program to earn a number one ranking, advance to the Final Four of their sport, and play in the NCAA Championship Game. This year's squad finished just short of joining the 1985 and 1986 women's volleyball teams as national champions.

Team Hits Individual Highs

Balazs Erdelyi '14 became just the third player in 45 years of NCAA men's water polo to be named Tournament MVP while not winning the title or sharing the award. His seven goals are believed to be the championship game record since removing two-point scores. He also posted nine goals in two games of the tournament—tying the NCAA record.

Joining Erdelyi on the All-Tournament First Team were Goran Tomasevic '14 and Alex Malkis '14. Alex Obert '15 and Kevin Oliveira '14 were named to the second team.

Erdelyi, the 2012 Peter J. Cutino Award recipient, was also named one of three finalists for the 2013 Cutino Award, looking to become the fourth player to win men's water polo's national player of the year in back-to-back seasons.

James Graham was named MPSF Coach of the Year, marking the first time a Pacific coach has been named the conference's top coach.



Balazs Erdelyi

Tigers Excel on the Field and in the Classroom

Pacific saw four athletic programs earn perfect scores while several programs showed gains in the latest Graduation Success Rate (GSR) and Federal Graduation Rate data for the annual NCAA Division I Academic Performance Program.

The data compiled for the 2003-06 cohort for Division I institutions shows that Pacific's men's basketball, men's golf, women's cross country and women's swimming programs all posted perfect scores, while 10 out of 16 reported scores for the Tigers were above the national average.

"I am very pleased with our progress in the Graduation Success Rate," said Vice President for External Relations and Athletics Ted Leland. "It shows that we are producing successful student-athletes both in the classroom and on the field of competition."

Out of a possible score of 100, Pacific has an overall program GSR of 87.

Men's Volleyball to Transition to Club Sport

As part of the University's Focusing on Our Future initiative, men's volleyball will be eliminated as an NCAA Division I sport at Pacific effective June 30. Beginning in July, the team will transition to a club sport in a highly competitive club league that includes UC Berkeley.

"The decision to eliminate one sport, rather than cut resources to all sports, was the right decision given the goal to enhance the excellence of the overall athletics program," said President Eibeck in a memo to the campus community. Men's volleyball was chosen for elimination because of Pacific's commitment to the West Coast Conference and the mix of teams needed to compete in that conference, men's volleyball's comparatively short time as a varsity sport at Pacific, and its competitive posture, she said.

The choice was difficult to make, yet necessary from an institutional perspective, she said. "Our men's volleyball athletes are highly valued members of our community. I salute their inspiring school spirit, integrity, teamwork and athleticism. I have the highest respect for their advocacy on behalf of their team and their coach."

The Focusing on Our Future initiative, launched in February 2013, will allow every academic program and administrative unit at the University to reflect on how effective its efforts are and how aligned they are with Pacific's mission and strategic vision. It seeks to generate a \$15 million strategic investment fund that will enable Pacific to enhance its educational excellence and continue to thrive in a rapidly changing higher education environment, while keeping student tuition low. Read more at go.Pacific.edu/Future.

Catch the Tigers in Action!

Tune in to **THE  .TV**

Tigers to be televised in 16 of 18 West Coast Conference games

For a listing of upcoming games and times: TheW.tv



Coach Ron Verlin and men's basketball player **Tony Gill '14** were interviewed for TheW.tv during the WCC media day.

Get the latest information about your favorite Tiger team:
PacificTigers.com