

## 2017-2018 Lutheran West Intramural Season Preview & Predictions

This year brings a lot of storylines to the table. The main one being the Ex-Longhorns. After a tough upset to D2 in last year's playoffs, they decided that enough is enough. They completely changed the lineup, and signed a majority of recent varsity players. This caused a stirrup in the league. The seniors formed super teams (Sea Cows, Anchorage Chill) in an effort to combat the Ex-Longhorns.

Another big storyline is the size of this year's competition. This year, intramurals is made up of 13 teams, the biggest the league has seen in a very long time (possibly ever). It will be interesting to see how a playoff bracket will be made of this odd number of teams.

With the past, two-time champion Air Buddies disbanding for college, an empty champion spot is up for grabs. Will it be a senior team snagging it for their final year at West? Will a junior team finish with the gold to come back next year? Or will it be D2 team creating the "upset of the century?" Here are my predictions of how the whole season will play out...

### **Power Rankings**

(in order of least to greatest)

#### **13. Penguins (D2)**

The Penguins are a team led by sophomore captain Jake DeTullio. DeTullio played one game last year on the Purple Cobras where he scored 3 pts and got a board. They also have Gio Lopez who was the only one the Purple Cobras last year with a negative Personal Efficiency Rating (PER). I predict big rookie seasons for Matthias Andujar and Messiah Harrison. They will get a majority of rebounds and put a fierce post presence on the court. But overall, it should be a very interesting season for the Penguins this year. But hey... Trust The Process?

**Strengths:** "Veteran Experience" and post presence.

**Weakness:** Lack of experience...

**Overall:** Will most likely place in the bottom tier of D2.

#### **12. Hoodie Dolphins (D2)**

I've never seen any of these players play at such a high level as Division II Intramurals. But, from what I've seen across the street at Linden Park, the true star of this team is Hugo Lopez. Carlos Ramazani will also most likely be a star of this team. Other than that, I have no further info on the Hoodie Dolphins roster. But guessing that since they're a freshmen team, they'll be near the bottom.

**Strengths:** Hugo Lopez

**Weaknesses:** No real game plan, and lack of experience.

**Overall:** Will most likely place in the bottom tier of D2.

#### **11. Screaming Gophers (D2)**

This is a very interesting team. Anthony Breckel is looking to stuff every stat in the book. After averaging a point a game and 2.67 turnovers per game, he is probably looking to redeem himself this season. He will most likely do really well against the D2 teams. But I feel fairly bad for the remaining freshmen recruits on his team, as he will most likely require the ball most of the time in order to "show" his "dominance."

**Strengths:** Breckel

**Weaknesses:** Breckel

**Overall:** Breckel will play 1-2 good games then never show up to another game. They'll win those games. But the team should be in the middle of D2.

#### **10. Fat Monkeys (D2)**

This is the only mainly-freshmen team that may not do as horrible as your average freshman team. Brandon Marvel brings a post and hustling presence on the court. I expect him to put up the best numbers on the team. Other players on the team include Emmanuel Reyes, Andrew DiCarro and Devin Headrick. But the biggest

storyline from this team has to be Keith Brooks. He has made numerous claims since he's been at West that he is one of the "best players here." Will he support his theory, or will it fall through? Only time will tell.

**Strengths:** Good speed and post.

**Weaknesses:** Depth and guard:post ratio

**Overall:** Will be near the top and middle area of D2.

### 9. Predators (D2)

Jake Albrecht looks to try and pull a Westbrook on D2 again. Previously known as the Polar Bears, the Predators consist of the same base as last year's team. Albrecht will definitely be the top player on the team. Alex Mader and Sam Spacek will bring great speed and "shooting." Christopher Rudnickas has a big chance to be in the Top 5 in D2 rebounding. They also brought on freshmen recruits such as Jason Perez and Ian Rescola. They also made a senior pickup in Brandon Schabel. If they play as a team, they will be more successful. But if all goes the same way as last year, that may not be so truthful.

**Strengths:** Jake Albrecht and speed.

**Weaknesses:** Depth, shooting ability, and talent.

**Overall:** Not too great of a team, but will beat their young competitors.

### 8. Hippy Hoppity Hippos (D2)

The Hippos, previously known as the Sea Cucumbers, will be a solid D2 team. Last year, David Busch proved his greatness. He almost averaged a double double with 8.7 PPG and 9.7 RPG. In my opinion, he will be at the very top of the award race for D2 Player of the Year. Mike Montie will also be a top player. Those two are currently the best duo in D2. Dylan Thorne, along with Cameron Wandrie, will try and prove themselves as solid guards in D2. The season is looking good for the Hippos.

**Strengths:** Speed, a rebounding monster, and fast breaking ability.

**Weaknesses:** Bench and 3-point range.

**Overall:** Almost guaranteed top-2 D2 team.

### 7. City Sloths (D2)

The City Sloths, previously referred to as the Purple Cobras, are my top choice as the D2 Champions. Nick Justice, Mason Degi, and Alex Pitcole look to be great weapons on the court. The signings of Michael Long, Adam Castro, Mason Degi, and Hunter Caraballo really added great depth to this team. Another aspect of why I believe they'll take it all this year is the fact that they have the championship drive. According to numerous sources from the team, they practice all the time, perfecting the City Sloths' game. The season looks very bright for the Sloths.

**Strengths:** An all-around roster.

**Weaknesses:** True post presence

**Overall:** Will win all D2 games they play.

### 6. Alaskan Bullworms (D1)

This team is comprised of an ex-JV player and two past key role-players. Josh Krempasky is looking to bring success to his team after parting ways with Lutheran West JV. Noah Tolonen & John Spooner look to branch out from their previous teams (Stingrays & Polar Bears/Anchorage Chill) and run their own squad. I predict that Tolonen will be the main scorer and be in the top-5 in D1 3's. Krempasky will dominate the boards with his height and have a guaranteed spot in the Top-10 D1 rebounding list. Evan Brown, Isaac Reprogle, and Matthew Rodriguez are also there. While this team sounds decent, they most likely won't be too much in D1. After all, they wanted to be in D2 in the first place.

**Strengths:** Perimeter offense and rebounding

**Weaknesses:** Bench, and true forward positions.

**Overall:** Dead last in a division they're not fitted for.

### 5. Stingrays (D1)

The Stingrays are making their D1 debut this year. Their team is comprised of their main duo of Malik Dillard & David Hrusovsky, along with two ex-LW players in Nick Friedrich & Tyler Seagro. They also picked up key assets of Chris Hartman & Brian Kuszniir. They will definitely have more of a bench than their nonexistent one last

year. While they don't have as much talent as many of the D1 teams, they have less players than most teams. So I predict that their individual stats will be better than most team's rosters. I predict Dillard will be Top-10 in most categories, Hrusovsky in Top-10 in rebounds and assists, and Kusznir in air-balls. They will have to face much difficulty for a possible road to the top, hopefully they're up for the challenge.

**Strengths:** Shooting and chemistry

**Weaknesses:** Rebounding, and speed.

**Overall:** Good passion, but near the lower half of D1.

#### 4. Righteous Bros (D1)

This may be a shocker to most people, but hear me out. If they have the same attendance issues as last year, they will most likely not be that good of a team. I mean, as good as Mr. Geye is, he's not really a "carry my team" kind of player. But, if they are all in their ability to make games, they will most likely dominate the league. But until they prove me wrong, they're at #4.

**Strengths:** Age

**Weaknesses:** Attendance issues

**Overall:** #1 if all there.

#### 3. Anchorage Chill (D1)

The Anchorage Chill have made a great improvement to their roster since last year.  $\frac{2}{3}$  of their roster is comprised of great free agent pickups. Alex Gavlak has hopes of redeeming himself of last year's team struggles. Jimmy Miles has an eye set for glory. John Lavelle is looking to make his only season remarkable. And Joel Ryan is tall. Preston Warren has hopes to be an all-star once again. This team has a chance of winning it all if they put all of the chips in and try their absolute hardest every game. Like Isaiah Thomas, they are small, fast, and mighty. Trent Blackburn really set up a great lineup of people this year. They are the underdogs of the season.

**Strengths:** Speed, rebounding, and height. Very well-rounded

**Weaknesses:** Turnovers

**Overall:** Top in the division

#### 2. Sea Cows (D1)

The Sea Cows are compiled from a giant modge-podge of past intramural teams, along with ex-JV players. They have 3 Grizzlies alumni in Nick Moore, Jeremy Geye, & Alex Seagro. They also have last year's D2 Player of the Year in John Smolik. They also picked up two players from last year's JV team, Nate Knudsen and Zach Dillon. This team is very well-rounded and have much talent. This team will most likely have a large amount of players in Top 10's of stats. It'll also be interesting in how the newcomers will do in their new intramural environment, as in the past, ex-JV players don't do their hottest their first year due to the lack of effort. Regardless, I doubt that will hinder the success of this team. If they give it their all, I wouldn't find them winning a championship surprising.

**Strengths:** Multiple well-rounded assets, strength.

**Weaknesses:** Chemistry

**Overall:** In the running for a trophy.

#### 1. Ex-Longhorns (D1)

This team looks scary on paper. Everything you need in a good team, they have on their roster. Their whole starting lineup can shoot, rebound, drive, and handle the ball. They have last year's leader in points and 3 pointers, Christian Capretta. They have two all-stars in Capretta and Owen Albers. They also have two previous varsity players, Brett Mather & Colin Neumann. Returning players Davis Kuhrt and Joey Warnken should be great assets to the team as well. Nate Upole is on the team too... There should be many all-stars coming out of this team along with D1 leaders. From the looks of it, just about everyone on the team could carry the team any game against any opponent. They are the clear top-dogs in the league.

**Strengths:** All-star talent throughout the whole team

**Weaknesses:** Nate Upole

**Overall:** Best talent and best chances to win it all.