As usual it is a bit of a guessing game to try to predict how each team will fare in their upcoming season.

With this in mind this reporter boldly suggests that the University of Oklahoma will lead the pack throughout the entire season.

NOTE: The gymnasts named below, for the most part, finished in the top 8 at either their conference meet or at Nationals in 2014.

1. University of Oklahoma: In spite of losing some quality gymnasts OU returns ten gymnasts that placed in the top 8 in either their conference championships or at the 2014 NCAA Nationals. This represents quality and experience.


Losses: Chad Mason-8th PH-NCAA, 3rd PH-Big Ten; plus Cameron Rogers, Cole Smith and Alex Varga.

Frosh: Hunter Justus (TX).

2. University of Illinois: Although Illinois does lose some important scoring they also return quite a bit of serious talent that promises huge scores.

Returning: Jordan Valdez-5th PB, 1st HB-NCAA, 2nd PB, 2nd HB-Big Ten; C.J. Maestas-4th AA, 3rd FX, 2nd R-NCAA, 7th FX, 2nd R-Big Ten; Chandler Eggleston-2nd FX, 2nd V-NCAA, 1st FX-Big Ten; Mike Wilner-6th R-NCAA; Logan Bradley-6th PH-NCAA.

Losses: Chad Mason-8th PH-NCAA, 3rd PH-Big Ten; plus Cameron Rogers, Cole Smith and Alex Varga.

Frosh: Bob Baker (IL), Tyson Bull (Australia), Harry McLeLlan (NJ), Dennis Minton (OH), Eric Uster (OH).

3. University of Michigan: This is a tough one to call because in spite of losing about half of their scoring they return a host of proven talent.

Returning: Adrain de los Angeles (injured 2014, but if healthy he is a force)-2013 Pre-Season Coaches Poll:

1. Oklahoma
2. Michigan
3. Ohio State
4. Stanford
5. Illinois
6. Penn St.
7. Minnesota
8. California
9. Iowa
10. Nebraska
11. Air Force
12. Army
13. William/Mary’
14. Navy
15. Arizona State
16. Ill-Chicago
17. Springfield
18. Temple
19. Brockport
20. Washington

Ellis Mannon: Minnesota: Big Ten and NCAA Pommel Horse Champion.

Alec Robin: Oklahoma: NCAA Floor Exercise and Vault Champion.

Jordan Valdez: Illinois: NCAA High Bar Champion. 2nd place on Parallel Bars in both NCAA and Big Ten.
AA, 8th PB-NCAA, 2nd AA, 5th V-Big Ten; Tristan Rivera-7th V-NCAA, 2nd FX, 7th V-Big Ten; Nick Hunter-6th PH, 6th PB-Big Ten; Colin Mahar-8th R-Big Ten; Paul Rizkalla-2nd V-Big Ten; Konner Ackerman-6th V-Big Ten; Stacey Ervin-5th FX-NCAA. Losses: Sam Mikulak-Nissen-Emery winner, 1st AA, 4th FX, 8th V, 1st PB-NCAA, 1st AA, 3rd FX, 4th V, 3rd PB-Big Ten; Alex Bubnov-4th R-Big Ten; Syque Caesar-3rd PB, 5th HB-NCAA, 7th V, 3rd PB, 6th HB-Big Ten; Matt Freeman, Jordan Gaarenstroom-7th R-Big Ten. Frosh: Dmitri Belanovski (WI), Alec Krystek (MI), Marty Strech (CA), Brennen Thomas (MI).

4. Ohio State: OSU may have been a bit disappointed in their showing at Nationals in 2014 so will be out to improve on that and they just might have the muscle to do it. Returning: Sean Melton-3rd AA, 6th V, 6th PB, 3rd HB-NCAA, 2nd AA, 4th PH, 1st PB, 1st HB-Big Ten; Jake Martin-5th AA, 2nd PB-NCAA, 1st AA, 5th FX, 3rd FB, 6th R, 4th V, 1st PB-MPSF; Michael Levy-7th FX-NCAA, 2nd FX-MPSF; Dennis Zarremski-5th R-NCAA, 2nd R-MPSF; Brian Knott-8th PB-NCAA, 7th PH, 2nd PB, 8th HB-MPSF. Losses: Paul Hichwa-1st HB-MPSF; Sean Senters-8th FX, 3rd V-NCAA, 2nd V-MPSF; Cale Robinson-6th PB-MPSF. Frosh: Jacob Barrus (TX), Drew Burton (CO), Robert Neff (WI), Ryan Sheppard (TX).

6. Penn State: The Nittany Lions are in what probably is best described as a rebuilding mode. They lost a large senior class two years ago, but this past season only lost a minimal amount. They return some strong individuals, but will have to rely on freshmen to mature quickly for depth. Returning: Trevor Howard-9th AA, 9th R, 6th PB-NCAA, 5th AA, 1st R, 5th V, 7th PB-Big Ten; Craig Hernandez-5th PH-NCAA, 2nd PH-Big Ten; Alexis Torres-8th R-NCAA, 7th AA-Big Ten; Nestor Rodriguez-8th PB-Big Ten. Losses: Preston Gall, Wasef Burbar-8th HB-Big Ten; Adrain Evans-Nissen-Emery finalist, Ingvar Jochumsson. Frosh: Very large class: Patrick Casey (OR), Colin Coates (PA), Ben Cooperman (MA), Joe Fernandez (PA), Quest Hayden (GA), Thad Lawson (VA), Quinn Malm (CO), Noah Roberson (NY), Joshua Smith (LA), Greg Tamargo (PA).

7. University of Minnesota: The Gophers fairly consistently finish just barely out of the Super Six and this year, unfortunately, it looks like 2015 will be a repeat of that situation. Having graduated about 1/3rd of their team UM will have to depend heavily on their large freshmen class for depth. Returning: Steve Jaciuk-9th HB-NCAA, 5th PB, 7th HB-Big Ten; Ellis Mannon-1st PH-NCAA, 6th AA, 1st PB-Big Ten; Jack Metcalf-5th R-Big Ten. Losses: Zack Chase-9th V-NCAA, 3rd V-Big Ten, Matt Frey-9th PB-NCAA. Also lost: 2nd AA, 6th FX, 2nd PB-MPSF; Takahiro Kawada-2nd PH-MPSF; Jonathan Liu-5th PB-MPSF; Kevin Wolting-7th HB-MPSF. Losses: Donovan Bailey-6th AA, 7th PH-NCAA, 8th FX, 1st PH-MPSF; Jeff Langenstein-7th V-MPSF. Frosh: Yordan Aleksandrov, Gagik Gharebyan, Nathaniel Ramil, Michael Rauchwerger, Jacob Silvestri; all from California.

8. University of California: The Bears will very shortly start to realize the benefits of having Brett McClure as their coach. It may not be this year, but soon. The loss of Donovan Bailey will take away many of their top scores. Returning: Kyle Zemeir-7th AA-NCAA, 2nd AA, 6th FX, 2nd PB-MPSF; Takeshi Kawada-2nd PH-MPSF; Jonathan Liu-5th PB-MPSF; Kevin Wolting-7th HB-MPSF. Losses: Donovan Bailey-6th AA, 7th PH-NCAA, 8th FX, 1st PH-MPSF; Jeff Langenstein-7th V-MPSF. Frosh: Yordan Aleksandrov, Gagik Gharebyan, Nathaniel Ramil, Michael Rauchwerger, Jacob Silvestri; all from California.

9. University of Iowa: After finishing a surprising 5th in 2013 the Hawkeyes slipped a bit in 2014 so will be looking to rebound in 2015. This may prove to be quite challenging, but they do return some scoring punch. Returning: Matt Loochtan-9th R-NCAA; Mitchell Landau-7th HB-NCAA; Jack Boyle-8th AA-Big Ten, Doug Sullivan-5th PH-Big Ten.
12. U.S. Military Academy: Army coaches have been building the past few years and may have finally put it all together. Look for a strong shot at winning the ECAC and a trip to the big show.

Returning: Jesse Glenn-1st AA, 5th FX, 5th PH, 3rd PB, 2nd HB-USAG, 1st AA, 3rd PH, 6th R, 2nd V, 4th PB, 1st HB-ECAC; Sam Kunitz-5th V, 6th HB-ECAC; Jacob Davies-8th PB-ECAC, Alex Ganz-6th PB-USAG; Joe Pritts-8th FX-ECAC.

Losses: Ian Howard-5th FX-ECAC, Kip Webber-2nd V-USAG, 7th V-ECAC. Frosh: Seth Cannon (OK), Liam Fulton (Germany), Nathan Goff (CA), Andre Hufnagel (WA), Nicholas Mcafee (WA) Ryan Wilson (OR), Cameron Wright (TX).

13. College of William and Mary: May see a slight drop in production after their excellent 2014 season, primarily due to very serious graduations. Quite a bit of talent returning, however. Great PH team returning.

Returning: Keaton Ackerman-5th AA-USAG; Aria Sabbagh-8th AA-USAG, Neal Courter-2nd FX, 1st V, 4th HB-USAG; Jason Wang-3rd PH-USAG; Michael Deitz-2nd HB-ECAC, 3rd HB-USAG; J. J. Jindra-4th AA, 4th PB, 8th HB-ECAC; Peter Ten Eyck-2nd PH-ECAC.

Losses: very substantial-Landon Funiciello-4th R-ECAC, 1st R-ECAC; USAG; Gared Chapman-3rd R-USAG, 7th R-MPSF; Josh Ramos-1st PB, 8th HB-USAG; Jon Spiro-3rd R-MPSF; Chase Cannon-6th HB-MPSF.

Frosh: Fletcher Braunton (WA), Dimitri Florynace, (NM), Jonathon Fornoff (IL), Michael Graft (IL), Wongsai Heur (WI) and Arinn Wade (NJ).
McClure-4th FX, 7th V-USAG; Pat Ryther-7th PH-USAG; Sam Docherty-8th PB-USAG; Andy Grabowski-7th HB-USAG, Desmond Carr-8th V-ECAC.
Losses: Pat Hanley-7th R-ECAC, James Hennin, Ryan Ponce-3rd R-NCAA, 2nd R-USAG, 5th R, 6th PB-ECAC.
Frosh: Alex Campagnon (R.I.), Joshua Dieker (FX), Mike Girmaldi (NJ), Chris Graff (NY), Philip Ordonez (FL), Dan Taranto (MA).

NISSEN-EMERY AWARD
This may well be the most wide open N-E selection voting ever. At least a half-dozen candidates will be in the running. This bold forecaster is forced to quibble a bit. The strongest candidates appear to be Valdez of Illinois, Mannon of Minnesota and Robin of Oklahoma. The toughest part may be the decision some schools will have to make to narrow their list down to one nominee.

Potential Nissen-Emery Nominees

Arizona State University:
With rumors that ASU might be reinstated as a varsity sport this could be a very high spirited team.
As surely as the sun rises in the east the ASU wins the USAG Collegiate Club division nationals.
Returning: Zack Mollett-3rd FX, 6th PH, 2nd PB-USAG; Ty Loughridge-3rd V-USAG.
Losses: Lee Wilkerson-1st AA, 8th FX, 8th R, 5th HB-USAG; Stewart MacDonald-2nd AA-USAG; Stevie Gregg-4th AA-USAG.
Frosh: Daniel Bronnenberg, Austin Kane, Nikita Latman, Sean Obley, Jon Voyles.

Temple University:
Temple Men’s Gymnastics enters a new era this season, as the team in no longer varsity but now competes as a club. This change came about after representing Temple in varsity intercollegiate competition for 88 years. Tremendous efforts are underway to return the sport to varsity status, however.
Temple plans on competing at the USAG Collegiate Nationals and also at the NAIGC Nationals in P.A.
Returning: Mike Bittner, Blaise Cosenza and Colton Howard, Grady Cooper, Pat Henley, Jon Rydzewski, Wayne Conley, Aaron Meland, Misha Kustin and Jacob Welsh-6th-R-ECAC.
Losses: Evan Eigner (transfer to OSU) 3rd-R-ECAC, John Leonard, Scott Hadaway, Charles Baldi and Brandon Williams.
Frosh: Tim Jones (MI), Joe Luca (NJ), Jordan Motter (PA) and Demetris Zambas (NJ).
Temple will have one home meet...vs. UIC

University of Washington:
Report submitted by Coach Mark Russo:
Our team will be much better this year. We recruited in Region 1 and are having success getting good gymnasts.
From California coming up to Washington I see us breaking into the 400's for team score which will be over a 20 point increase from last season's high score.
Returning: Justin Rowen, Aaron Moss, Franklin Stutevoss, Alex Maybruck, Max Soifer, Brandon Waller, Wyatt Zmrzel.
We will be led by 5 good all arounders. Brandon Waller -3rd AA-USAG; Justin Rowen-5th AA-USAG; Aaron Moss-6th AA-USAG; Nick Kano and Carl Meader. Nathan Tsuji and Max Soifer both good on 5 events. Franklin Stutevoss will compete on floor and vault. Wyatt Zmrzel looks to help us pommels and phars.
Losses: Greg Steward, Layton Oka and Peter Moser-7th AA-USAG.
Frosh: Nick Kano (CA), Nathan Tsuji (CA), Carl Meader (CA), Chris Ramsey (MT)

CALENDAR OF MAJOR EVENTS

Results of my predictions for 2013:
Picked Michigan 1st finished 1st
Picked Oklahoma 2nd finished 2nd
Picked Illinois 3rd finished 4th
Picked Stanford 4th finished 3rd
Picked Penn State 5th finished 6th
Picked Ohio State 6th finished 5th
Picked Minnesota 7th finished 7th
Picked California 8th finished 10th
Picked Iowa 9th finished 9th
Picked Nebraska 10th finished 8th
Picked Air Force 11th finished 11th
Picked William/Mary 12th finished 12th
Picked Temple 13th finished 16th
Picked Army 14th finished 13th
Picked UIC 15th finished 17th
Picked Navy 16th finished 14th
Picked Springfield 17th finished 15th

Potential Nissen-Emery Nominees

Air Force: Skyler Awisus
Air Force: Gared Chapman
California: Jonathan Liu
Illinois: Mike Wilmer
Illinois: Jordan Valdez
Iowa: Mitchell Landau
Iowa: Lance Alberhasky
Michigan: Stacey Ervin
Minnesota: Steve Jaciuk
Minnesota: Ellis Mannon
Nebraska: Robbie Kocks
Nebraska: Grant Perdue
Ohio State: Drew Moling
Ohio State: Larry Mayer
Oklahoma: Michael Reid
Oklahoma: Alec Robin
Oklahoma: Michael Squires
Penn State: Craig Hernandez
Penn State: Matthew Felleman
UIC: Jason Gaides

Emery Nominees

Jason Gaides
Matthew Felleman
Craig Hernandez
Stacey Ervin
Mitchell Landau
Jordan Valdez
Mike Wilner
Jonathan Liu
Mike Bittner
"
TOP INDIVIDUAL RETURNEES
(based on 2014 Nationals results).

All Around
Akash Modi, Stan
Sean Melton, OSU
C.J. Maestas, Ill
Jake Martin, OSU
Kyle Zeimeir, Calif
Trevor Howard, Penn St

Floor Exercise
Alec Robin, Okla.
Chandler Eggleston, Ill
C.J. Maestas, Ill
Stacey Ervin, Mich.
Colin V. Wicklen, Okla.
Michael Levy, Stan.

Pommel Horse
Ellis Mannion, Minn.
Michael Reid, Okla.
Tim Wang, Air Force
Craig Hernandez, Penn St.
Logan Bradley, Ill

Rings
Michel Squires, Okla.
C.J. Maestas, Ill
Dennis Zaremski, Stan.
Mike Milner, Ill
Matt Loochta, Iowa
Alexis Torres, Penn St.

Vault
Alec Robin, Okla.
Chandler Eggleston, Ill
Jeff Treleaven, OSU
Colin V. Wicklen, Okla.
Sean Melton, OSU

Parallel Bars
Akash Modi, Stan.
Danny Berardini, Okla.
Jordan Valdez, Ill
Sean Melton, OSU
Brian Knott, Stan.

Horizontal Bar
Jorden Valdez, Ill
Jake Martin, OSU
Sean Melton, OSU
William Clement, Okla.
Alex Johnson, OSU

Rings
Michel Squires, Okla.
C.J. Maestas, Ill
Dennis Zaremski, Stan.
Mike Milner, Ill
Matt Loochta, Iowa
Alexis Torres, Penn St.
Vault
Alec Robin, Okla.
Chandler Eggleston, Ill
Jeff Treleaven, OSU
Colin V. Wicklen, Okla.
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Jordan Valdez, Ill
Sean Melton, OSU
Brian Knott, Stan.

Horizontal Bar
Jorden Valdez, Ill
Jake Martin, OSU
Sean Melton, OSU
William Clement, Okla.
Alex Johnson, OSU

MPSF Championships
Alec Robin, Okla.

April 9-11 NCAA Nationals
Alec Robin, Okla.

Adrain de los Angeles: University of Michigan
Jordan Valdez: University of Illinois

Photos of the Week

Alec Robin: University of Oklahoma