

# University of Minnesota Athletic Communications



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**Gopher Athletics**

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## **Seven Gophers Named Academic All-District**

MINNEAPOLIS ([GopherSports.com](http://GopherSports.com)) – The University of Minnesota led all NCAA Division I programs with seven CoSIDA Academic All-District At-Large honorees, the organization announced on Thursday.

Representing the Maroon & Gold for the first time as Academic All-District winners are Bailey Abernathy (women's gymnastics), Justin Karstadt (men's gymnastics), Yaroslav Pochinka (men's gymnastics), and Yu Zhou (women's swimming & diving) while Michael Kroells (wrestling), Brett Pfarr (wrestling) and Lee Stecklein (women's hockey) repeated as honorees for the second-straight year. All seven Gophers are now eligible to earn CoSIDA Academic All-America honors next month.

A native of Denver, Colo., Abernathy was named to the All-Big Ten Second Team in her final season with Minnesota as a senior. She is tied for second in program history after scoring a 9.950 on floor. Abernathy was named Big Ten Event Specialist three times during the season, and won eight event titles during the regular season. She will graduate this spring with a degree in physiology while the senior has also earned a Big Ten Postgraduate Scholarship.

A native of Toronto, Ontario and a member of the Canadian National Team, Karstadt closed out a strong sophomore season as the Big Ten Co-Gymnast of the Year. Karstadt earned a trio of top-10 finishes at the Big Ten championships, including a silver medal on pommel horse, to be named to the

finishes at the Big Ten championships, including a silver medal on pommel horse, to be named to the All-Big Ten First Team for the second-straight year. He competed in the all-around competition at the NCAA Championships. During the regular-season finale, Karstadt scored an 87.050 on all-around to become just the third gymnast in the nation to break 87 points and the only competitor to do so in the Big Ten. A kinesiology major, Karstadt earned Academic All-Big Ten honors in his first season of eligibility.

A native of Belle Plaine, Minn., Kroells is a three-time All-American and a four-time letter winner. As a three-time All-American, the senior is part of a select group of just 26 Gophers in program history to reach the NCAA podium three times. His three consecutive All-America seasons extended Minnesota's heavyweight tradition, a weight class at which Minnesota has now produced an All-American 20 times in the past 25 years. Kroells' 119 wins are tied for the 17th-most in program history. He has been recognized four times as Academic All-Big Ten and is also a 2016 CoSIDA Academic All-American as he pursues his degree in aerospace engineering.

A native of Le Sueur, Minn., Pfarr is a two-time All-American for the Gophers as well as a four-time letter winner. As a senior, Pfarr not only reached the Big Ten finals for the second time in his career, he also advanced to the NCAA finals. During his two seasons at 197 pounds, Pfarr went 71-7, including 30-0 in duals, 18-0 in the Big Ten, and 28-7 against ranked opponents. His 120 career wins are 16th-best in program history, and his .845 winning percentage is tied for 14th-best. He's also a four-time Academic All-Big Ten honoree and a 2016 CoSIDA Academic All-American, majoring in agriculture and food business management.

A native of Plano, Texas, Pochinka was an All-Big Ten Second Team honoree this season as a junior. He placed ninth on vault at the NCAA Championships and earned bronze on vault at the Big Ten Championships. During the season, Pochinka was ranked third in the nation on vault and first in the Big Ten. A neuroscience major at Minnesota, Pochinka is a two-time Academic All-Big Ten honoree and a Big Ten Distinguished scholar while he was also named the NCAA Elite 90 Award winner as a freshman.

A native of Roseville, Minn., Stecklein has earned her second CoSIDA Academic All-District nod after also collecting the honor last season. An Entrepreneurial Management major in Minnesota's Carlson School of Business, Stecklein was a CoSIDA Academic All-American last season as well. The defenseman is a three-time WCHA Scholar-Athlete and WCHA All-Academic Team honoree along with being a three-time AHCA/CCM All-American and All-WCHA First Team selection. She was named Minnesota's female Big Ten Medal of Honor recipient this spring. Stecklein wrapped up her career this season ranked seventh in scoring among all-time Gopher defensemen with 93 career points. The three-time team captain led the Gopher women's hockey team to three national titles during her five-year career with the Maroon & Gold.

A native of Wuhan, China, Zhou is a two-time NCAA champion on the 3-meter diving board. The senior has earned seven All-America honors during her three-year career as well as seven Big Ten titles. She has been named the Big Ten Diver of the Year and the Big Ten Diver of the Championships

ties. She has been named the Big Ten Diver of the Year and the Big Ten Diver of the Championships all three years at Minnesota. A communications studies major, Zhou is also a two-time Academic All-Big Ten honoree, earning the honor every year she has been eligible.

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