

GCU Women's Golf / Spring 2010

You need more than a roster to tell the players on the Grand Canyon University women's golf team.

You need an atlas. A world atlas.

Three of the Antelopes' seven players are from overseas, reflecting a trend seen nationally in women's golf at the college level.

"Title Nine requires institutions to have so many more opportunities for women," says GCU Coach Marc Chandonnet. "Players know there are scholarships out there. It can be difficult to recruit great (American) players. You're seeing more recruiting overseas."

Juniors Georgina Dunn (England) and Jacqueline Sneddon (Scotland) and freshman Alexandra Malmsjo (Sweden) provide the international flavor for GCU, and a commitment from a British player for next year is already in the bag.

Chandonnet is expecting big things this spring from Dunn, a transfer from New Mexico State University.

"She's an amazing addition," he says. "She has so much talent and maturity. But we need all of our players to play well."

Next year, the women's golf program will be fully funded, with 5.4 scholarships, and Chandonnet already is being more selective in recruiting. The GCU women finished the fall season ranked 22nd in NCAA Division II, their second-best ranking ever, and they're among the half-dozen best teams in their region.

The team opens the spring season Feb. 26-28 at the NAU Red Rocks Invitational in Sedona. Because GCU has no conference affiliation in women's golf, the Antelopes will use their own GCU Invitational at Palm Valley Golf Club in April to tune up for the NCAA regional.

There's added incentive this spring for senior Jennifer Lutz. She grew up playing Longbow Golf Club in Mesa, which will host the NCAA Division II Championships in mid-May. Lutz was an individual qualifier last year for the NCAA regional and is looking to improve on a subpar fall season.

Chandonnet has a goal for himself, but he doesn't burden his players with it. Only one coach in NCAA history — Rick LaRose of the University of Arizona — has won both men's and women's national championships in golf.

He'd like to be the second.

"We're close," Chandonnet says of GCU's progress. "The challenge is to make it happen. It can come down to one shot per round per player. At this level, you work on the mental side more than the physical talent."

And you keep Rand McNally nearby, just in case.