

# Ionescu and Durr headline AP preseason All-America team

By **DOUG FEINBERG**  
AP Basketball Writer

NEW YORK — Sabrina Ionescu has already broken records at Oregon and she's only starting her junior year.

The NCAA career leader for triple-doubles headlines The Associated Press women's basketball preseason All-America team.

Ionescu, who has 10 triple doubles in her young career, received 29 votes Thursday from the 31-member national media panel that selects the AP Top 25 each week.

"She's a great competitor who brings it each and every day," Oregon coach Kelly Graves said. "She's very consistent in her effort, has a high basketball IQ and obviously her skills speak for themselves. She can pass it, she can shoot it, she can handle it. There's nothing

she really can't do on a basketball court. She'll give us whatever the team needs in that specific game. ... She's a special player that doesn't come along very often."

Ionescu, who averaged 19.7 points, 7.8 assists and 6.7 rebounds last season, is joined on the team by Louisville's Asia Durr, UConn's Katie Lou Samuelson, Notre Dame's Arike Ogunbowale and Baylor's Kalani Brown.

Durr is one of the most dynamic scorers in college basketball and the senior has been a huge part of the reason Louisville has been successful the past few years. She averaged 18.7 points last season to get the Cardinals to the Final Four.

"She just loves to be in the gym. Skill-wise continued to develop her game offensively. She's not just a 3-point shooter, she can



AP Photo/Ted S. Warren, File

In this Friday, March 2, 2018 file photo, Oregon's Sabrina Ionescu (20) drives down the court.

shoot the pullup. She gets to the rim. Able to score in all 3 phases. Also sees the court extremely well," Louisville coach Jeff Walz said. "She's a gifted passer. She's come a long as we've really just worked on all aspects of her game. She came in more as a

scorer and now I think she's developed a really good all-around basketball game."

It's the second straight season that Samuelson is a preseason All-American. UConn's leader averaged 17.4 points last season and shot 53 percent from the

field and nearly 48 percent on 3-point attempts.

"She's been an All-American two years in a row, watching her the last couple weeks she's healthier and improved in so many ways over the last two seasons and we're going to need her to be all that unlike her freshman, sophomore and junior year," UConn coach Geno Auriemma said. "She has less experience around her and we are going to need her to do more. I don't only expect her to be an All-American again, I expect her to be the best player in the country."

Ogunbowale may be the most well-known member of the team after hitting historic game-winning shots in both the semifinals and finals of the NCAA Tournament last season to lead Notre Dame to the title. She averaged 20.8

points and 5.4 rebounds for the Irish as a junior last year.

"I think the biggest jump in Arike's game this summer has been in her leadership," Notre Dame coach Muffet McGraw said. "She's done a tremendous job with the freshmen. She's encouraging, she's really leading. She's always led by example, now she's doing it vocally."

Ogunbowale helped the Irish earn the No. 1 ranking in the AP's preseason poll.

Brown has been one of the most dominant centers in the country, leading Baylor with 20 points and 10.5 rebounds last year. The 6-foot-7 star has had a mid-range jumper and now says she can even shoot the 3.

Ionescu, Durr and Samuelson were first-team All-Americans last spring, with Brown and Ogunbowale making the second team.

## Top 25 includes four teams that missed NCAA field last year

By **STEVE MEGARGEE**  
AP Sports Writer

The preseason rankings suggest next season's NCAA Tournament could feature plenty of new faces.

The AP Top 25 includes four teams that failed to reach last year's big dance: No. 14 Oregon, No. 18 Mississippi State, No. 23 LSU and No. 25 Washington. In last year's preseason Top 25, the only ranked team that wasn't coming off an NCAA Tournament berth was No. 25 Texas A&M.

All four of the ranked teams that missed out on NCAA Tournament invitations did play in the NIT. Mississippi State advanced as far as the NIT semifinals before losing to eventual champion Penn State.

"Just to know we made it that far in the NIT with everyone coming back, we know we should have a good run to make it to the NCAA Tournament this year," Mississippi State guard Quindary Weatherspoon said.

Oregon reached the Final Four in 2017, and LSU last made the NCAA Tournament in 2015, but Mississippi State and Washington are trying to end longer droughts. Mississippi State hasn't earned a bid since 2009, and Washington is chasing its first NCAA Tournament appearance since 2011.

"Last year we were teaching them how to win," Washington coach Mike Hopkins said. "This year, we're teaching them how to handle expectations. So it'll be a new learning curve, but the kids have worked really hard and playing well together."

Here's a look at some teams that have realistic preseason hopes of reaching the NCAA Tournament after failing to get there last year.

### No. 14 Oregon

2017-18 record: 23-13 (10-8 Pac-12), lost in second round of NIT

Oregon is the Pac-12 media's pick to win the conference. Payton Pritchard returns after leading the Ducks in scoring (14.5) and assists (4.8) last season. Oregon also added the nation's No. 3 signing class according to the 247Sports Composite. The class is headlined by 7-foot-2 center Bol Bol, rated by the 247Sports Composite as the nation's No. 4 overall prospect in his class. Texas A&M-Corpus Christi graduate transfer Ehab Amin led all Division I players in steals (3.4) and averaged 16.9 points and 6.6 rebounds in 2016-17 before missing last season due to a hip injury.

### No. 25 Washington

2017-18 record: 21-13 (10-8 Pac-12), lost in second round of NIT

Washington returns all five starters and its top seven scorers from last season. The Huskies have four players who had double-figure scoring averages last season: Jaylen Nowell (16.0), Noah Dick-

erson (15.5), David Crisp (11.6) and Matisse Thybulle (11.2). Dickerson also had a team-leading 8.4 rebounds per game last season.

### Indiana

2017-18 record: 16-15 (9-9 Big Ten)

Indiana has one of the nation's most touted freshmen in guard Romeo Langford, who was rated as the No. 7 prospect in his class according to composite rankings of recruiting sites compiled by 247Sports. Langford headlines a five-man freshman class. Indiana returns senior forward Juwan Morgan, who earned second-team all-Big Ten honors and averaged 16.5 points and 7.4 rebounds last season. Other Hoosiers who made at least 12 starts last season include De'Ron Davis, Devonte Green and Zach McRoberts. Indiana adds Saint Mary's graduate transfer Evan Fitzner.

### No. 23 LSU

2017-18 record: 18-15 (8-10 Southeastern Conference, lost in second round of NIT)

Tremont Waters is back for his sophomore season after averaging 15.9 points and 6 assists last season. He is joined in the backcourt by Skylar Mays, who had 11.3 points per game last season. LSU added a signing class that was ranked fourth in the nation according to the 247Sports Composite. LSU's freshman class includes three top-35 national recruits in forwards Naz Reid and Emmitt Williams plus guard Ja'Vonte Smart.

### Marquette

2017-18 record: 21-14 (9-9 Big East), NIT quarterfinalist

Marquette returns four starters from last year's team. That list includes Markus Howard, who scored 20.4 points per game last season and earned second-team all-Big East honors. Sam Hauser averaged 14.1 points and shot 48.7 percent from 3-point range last season. Marquette's other returning starters are Sacar Anim and Matt Heldt. The Golden Eagles also add Fordham graduate transfer Joseph Chartouny and Nebraska transfer Ed Morrow. Chartouny averaged 3.34 steals to lead all Division I players last season.

### No. 18 Mississippi State

2017-18 record: 25-12 (9-9 SEC), NIT semifinalist

Mississippi State returns its top six scorers from last season and is ranked for the first time since February 2012. The Bulldogs' list of returners includes senior guard Quindary Weatherspoon, who averaged 14.4 points last season and was a second-team all-SEC pick by the league's coaches. Other notable returners include Eric Holman (10.9 ppg last year), Nick Weatherspoon (10.8), Lamar Peters (9.6), Tyson Carter (8.9) and Abdul Ado (7.8). The Bulldogs' freshman class is led by forward Reggie Perry.



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