

## 49ers Move Back to Conference USA

Written by Ryan Rose  
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Effective Monday, July 1, the Charlotte 49ers will pull their best Marty McFly impersonation and go back to the future by completing their move to Conference USA. Charlotte, which was a member of Conference USA for 10 years from 1995-96 to 2004-05, returns to the league after an eight-year stint in the Atlantic 10

Conference. Sixteen of Charlotte's 17 sports will compete in Conference USA in the upcoming 2013-14 academic year. Football will join Conference USA in 2015-16 after spending its first two years as an FCS Independent. Conference USA's 16-team membership is made up of Charlotte, East Carolina, FIU, Florida Atlantic, Louisiana Tech, Marshall, Middle Tennessee, North Texas, Old Dominion, Rice, Southern Miss, Tulane, Tulsa, UAB, UTEP and UTSA.

**Conference USA Notes:** Six schools now in Conference USA had men's basketball RPIs in the top 100 and eight were in the top 125 and three in the top 51. Likewise, six schools were in the top 100 in women's basketball. C-USA baseball sports nine top 125 RPI teams, including Super Regional qualifier Rice while nine golf programs ranked in Golfstat's top 125. Softball also sports five top 100 RPI teams. On the soccer front, Conference USA has 10 men's teams, including affiliates Kentucky, New Mexico and South Carolina. Six of those teams owned top 40 RPIs and eight were in the RPI top 75 led by top 20 programs New Mexico (13), Tulsa (14) and Charlotte (16). Women's soccer boasts seven schools that are in the RPI top 100. Three schools now in Conference USA went to bowl games in 2012-13 – with Rice and Tulsa both picking up victories. Conference USA has seven college football bowl ties: AutoZone Liberty Bowl, Beef 'O' Brady's St. Petersburg Bowl, Bell Helicopter Armed Forces Bowl, Heart of Texas Bowl, Military Bowl, R+L Carriers New Orleans Bowl, and Sheraton Hawai'i Bowl

Conference USA also enjoys strong TV Partnerships with Fox Sports Media Group; CBS Sports Network and ESPN. For 49ers fans, Conference USA evokes memories of C-USA Men's Basketball Players of the Year Eddie Basden and DeMarco Johnson and C-USA Tournament MVP's Galen Young and Rodney White. Conference USA also brought the 49ers performances from the likes of men's soccer all-America Jon Busch and the 1996 College Cup team, baseball's bash brothers (all-America teammates Bo Robinson and James Matan), women's track and field all-Americans Sharonda Johnson, Shareese Woods, Courtney Patterson and Cassie Ficken and men's track and field all-Americans Rephel Martin, Will Montgomery and Derrick Johnson. The 49ers first NCAA participants in golf (Paul Carpenter) and cross country (Molly Kerin, Vince Sherry and Kenneth Svendsen) all competed in Conference USA and women's soccer's made a quick run from start-up program to NCAA participant in Conference USA. Conference USA schools sport their own big name alums, including NFL stars like Chris Johnson (ECU), Byron Leftwich (Marshall), Terry Bradshaw (Louisiana Tech), "Mean" Joe Greene (North Texas), Brett Favre and Ray Guy (Southern Miss), Matt Forte (Tulane), Steve Largent and Drew Pearson (Tulsa), Seth Joyner (UTEP) and Roddy White (UAB) as well stars from other sports like Karl Malone (Louisiana Tech), Justin Verlander (Old Dominion), Graeme McDowell (UAB), Teresa Weatherspoon (Louisiana Tech), Anne Donovan and Nancy Lieberman (Old Dominion), Lance Berkman (Rice), Nancy Lopez (Tulsa), Bob Beamon and Nate Archibald (UTEP).

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### **2012-13 At A Glance:**

#### **2012-13 C-USA Men's Basketball RPI: 11**

6 of C-USA's 2013-14 teams were Top 100 RPI, 2012-13

8 of C-USA's 2013-14 teams were Top 125 RPI, 2012-13

#### **2012-13 C-USA Women's Basketball RPI: 8**

6 of C-USA's 2013-14 teams were Top 100 RPI, 2012-13

7 of C-USA's 2013-14 teams were Top 125 RPI, 2012-13

### **C-USA's 16-team membership includes:**

3 2012-13 College Bowl Game participants

3 2012-13 NCAA Tournament baseball teams (9 top 125 RPI)

4 2012-13 NCAA Tournament men's soccer teams (6 top 40 RPI; 8 top 75)

3 2012-13 NCAA Tournament softball teams (5 top 100 RPI)

7 Top 100 RPI women's soccer teams, 2012-13

5 Top 100 (Golfstat) golf programs (9 top 125), 2012-13

1 Top 25 ranked (ITA) men's tennis program, 2012-13

1 Top 25 ranked (ITA) women's tennis program, 2012-13

1 Top 25 ranked (USTFCCCA) men's cross country program, 2012-13

1 Top 25 ranked (USTFCCCA) men's indoor track and field program, 2012-13