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2007-08 IOWA CONFERENCE MEN'S BASKETBALL PREVIEW

CEDAR RAPIDS, IOWA . . . Loras College, which earned its first Iowa Intercollegiate Athletic Conference (IIAC) men's basketball title since 1951 last year, is the coaches' pick to repeat as the 2007-08 IIAC Champions. The Duhawks received eight of nine first-place votes, totaling the maximum 72 points in the IIAC men's basketball Coaches' Poll.

Buena Vista University picked up the remaining first-place vote and is second in the Poll with 64 points. The Beavers had a string of five consecutive Conference Tournament Championships snapped last season by Loras. Coe College holds down the third spot in the poll with 58 points, followed by Wartburg (48 points) and Central (45 points). The complete 2007-08 IIAC Men's Basketball Coaches' Poll follows.

Rank	School (1st place votes)	Points	2006-07 Record
1	Loras (8)	72	(21-7, 15-1 IIAC)
2	Buena Vista (1)	64	(17-9, 11-5 IIAC)
3	Coe	58	(19-8, 11-5 IIAC)
4	Wartburg	48	(11-15, 5-11 IIAC)
5	Central	45	(11-14, 8-8 IIAC)
6	Cornell	36	(8-17, 4-12 IIAC)
7	Simpson	34	(18-9, 10-6 IIAC)
8	Dubuque	27	(11-14, 5-11 IIAC)
9	Luther	22	(5-20, 3-13 IIAC)

Preseason Polls: Loras is ranked eighth in the DIII News preseason poll. The Duhawks are also listed among those receiving votes in the d3hoops.com preseason poll.

New Coaches: **Robbie Sieverding**, a two-time All-Missouri Valley Conference selection at Northern Iowa, is the new head coach at Dubuque, succeeding **Marty McDermott**. Sieverding was elevated to the head coaching position after four seasons as the Spartans' top assistant. **Greg Gorton**, a 1991 graduate of the University of St. Thomas, is the new head coach at Loras after four years as the Duhawks' top assistant. He replaces **Chad Walthall**, who left to become an assistant at the University of Iowa.

Team-By-Team Preview: A brief preview for each Iowa Conference team follows.

Buena Vista returns their entire starting lineup and a total of eight letterwinners from last season's 17-9 team that finished tied for second in the Conference with an 11-5 record. The Beavers, who will be looking to rebound after missing the NCAA Tournament for the first time in six years, will be led in the backcourt by guards **Andre Wagner** and **Rahn Franklin**. Wagner, the team's leading scorer and a Second Team All-Conference selection a year ago, averaged 13.3 points, 1.81 steals, 1.7 rebounds and 0.88 assists per game, ranking 13th in the Conference in scoring, fifth in steals, eighth in three-point field goal percentage (39.1 percent), and ninth in free throw percentage (77.6 percent). Franklin averaged 6.2 points, 2.8 rebounds and 3.65 assists, and 1.31 steals per game, ranking fourth in the IIAC in assists and 11th in steals. Up front, Buena Vista will look to center **Brian Fogleman** to lead. Fogleman averaged 10.2 points, 5.2 rebounds, and 1.69 assists per game, ranking among the league leaders in scoring (20th), rebounding (12th), and field goal percentage (10th, 52.0 percent).

Buena Vista head coach **Brian Van Haften** says, "We are excited about our season this year. We have some good juniors and seniors that get along very well, and have developed together over the last couple of years. We are excited to see where we can go from here. The league will be strong and there is no easy game on the schedule. It will be fun."

Central returns four starters and 13 letterwinners from last season's 11-14 team that finished fifth in the Conference with an 8-8 record. The Dutch, which finished at .500 in the league for the first time since 1995-96, will be led by a trio of guards – **Zak Clark**, **Miguel Ley**, and **Brett DeHoogh**. Clark, a Second Team All-IIAC selection last year, averaged 14.8 points, 3.3 rebounds, 2.9 assists, and 1.8 steals. He ranked eighth in the league in scoring, fourth in steals, sixth in assists, and second in free-throw percentage (88.0 percent). Ley averaged 9.0 points per game, 2.6 rebounds and 2.1 assists, and ranked eighth in the Conference in free-throw percentage (78.3 percent). DeHoogh posted 6.7 points, 4.1 rebounds, and 4.7 assists. He ranked second the league in assists and 14th in three-point field-goal percentage (36.4 percent). Post player **Keith Pedersen** also returns after averaging 7.4 points and 4.8 rebounds and shooting 54.4 percent from the floor, a mark that left him ranked fourth in the IIAC.

Central head coach **Mike Boschee** says, "We are looking forward to a very competitive race for the Iowa Conference championship. Quite a few good players have graduated from the league, but I'm sure it's going to be as exciting as ever."

Coe returns four starters and six letterwinners from last season's 19-8 team that tied for second place in the Conference with an 11-5 record. Two-time First Team All-Conference performer **Kyle Kuenstling** will lead the Kohawks this season after averaging 13.7 points and a team-high 7.4 rebounds and 4.96 assists per game in 2006-07. Kuenstling ranked in the top 15 in the Conference in scoring (10th), rebounds (3rd), assists (1st), field goal percentage (9th, 52.3 percent), blocked shots (3rd, 1.44/game), free throw percentage (13th, 75.2 percent), steals (t-15th, 1.15/game) and minutes played (4th, 31.04/game). Kuenstling will be joined in the frontcourt by forward **Chris Kehe**, who averaged 2.2 points and 1.2 rebounds in 23 games off the bench last season. Guards **Brian Brungard** and **Rob Hanna** will work out of the Kohawk backcourt. Brungard averaged 9.5 points and 2.5 rebounds per game and ranked 22nd in the IIAC in scoring, third in free throw percentage (87.3 percent), and fourth in three-point field goal percentage (41.1 percent). Hanna finished fourth on the team in scoring at 8.1 points per game, was second in steals (1.1/game) and third in both assists (4.1/game) and rebounds (2.6/game).

Coe head coach **Pat Juckem** says, "This should be another exciting year of Iowa Conference basketball. We are excited about the leadership and experience that our five seniors provide. This group is battle-tested and understands what it requires to be successful."

Cornell returns four starters and 13 letterwinners from last season's 8-17 team that finished eighth in the Conference with a 4-12 record. A trio of junior perimeter players will lead the Rams. Second Team All-Conference guard **Griffin LaDew** led the team in scoring last season, ranking seventh in the Conference. He shot 38.6 percent from the three-point line, 10th in the IIAC, and made 2.36 three-pointers per game, third in the IIAC. He also shot 83.3 percent from the free throw line, ranking fifth in the IIAC, and dished out 2.28 assists per game, 14th in the IIAC. LaDew will be joined in the backcourt by **Michael Tierney**, who averaged 4.7 points and 2.2 points per game while suffering through an injury-plagued sophomore year. Forward **Tyler Cody** was second on the team in scoring and 15th in the Conference with a 12.2 point per game average. Cody also averaged 4.6 rebounds per game and shot 38.2 percent from three-point range, ranking 15th and 11th, respectively.

Cornell head coach **Mike DeGeorge** says, "We are very excited about the potential of this team. Our returning group has had a tremendous amount of game experience and we like the talent of our newcomers. It will be important for us to get off to a good start and essential for us to sustain our effort and concentration throughout the season. If we are able to do those things, we will be much improved."

Dubuque returns two starters and seven letterwinners from last season's 11-14 team that finished tied for sixth in the Conference with a 5-11 record. Two-time All-Conference guard **Tyler Daugherty** leads a Spartan team looking to make the jump to the top division of the Iowa Conference. Daugherty led the Conference in scoring last season with a 20.7 points per game average. He ranked in the top-10 in the IIAC in assists (3rd, 4.0/game), rebounds (8th, 5.5/game), free-throw percentage (7th, 78.8 percent), steals (t-8th, 1.40/game), three-point field goals made (1st, 2.6/game), and minutes played (1st, 36.4/game). He was also 15th in the league in three-point field goal percentage with a 35.5 percent average. Forward **Jeremy Weak**s averaged 7.5 points per game while shooting 48.4 percent from the field.

Dubuque head coach **Robbie Sieverding** says, "The Iowa Conference will be very strong from top to bottom once again this year. In order to achieve our goals, we will need great leadership and effort. We hope to see improvement throughout the year and want to be playing our best basketball in February."

Loras returns its entire starting lineup and eight letterwinners from last season's 21-7 team that captured the school's first Iowa Conference title since 1951 with a 15-1 mark and advanced to the NCAA Tournament, but the Duhawks will have to adjust to new head coach Greg Gorton. Defending Iowa Conference Most Valuable Player **Kyle White** was Loras' leading scorer and rebounder last year. White averaged 13.4 points and 6.8 rebounds and shot 50.0 percent from the field, ranking 11th, 4th, and 12th in the IIAC, respectively. **Luke Slater**, a First Team All-Conference selection, averaged 12.4 points and 5.6 rebounds per game, which ranked 14th and sixth in the Conference. Slater was also in the IIAC's top-15 in field goal percentage (13th, 48.5 percent), free throw percentage (4th, 87.2 percent), three-point field goal percentage (9th, 38.8 percent), and blocked shots (14th, 0.61/game). Second Team All-IIAC guard **Ricky Kolze** was the Duhawks' second-leading scorer with a 13.4 point per game average, ranking 12th in the Conference. Kolze also ranked third in the IIAC in three-point field goal percentage (42.2 percent) and 15th in field goal percentage (48.4 percent).

Loras head coach **Greg Gorton** says, "The Loras men's basketball team returns a group of experienced Iowa Conference players. The team is excited and hungry to prove itself."

Luther returns two starters and seven letterwinners from last season's 5-20 team that finished ninth in the Conference with a 3-13 record. The Norse return their two of their top three scorers from last year, including guard **Austin Bildstein**. Bildstein led Luther in scoring with a 10.4 point per game average that ranked 18th in the IIAC. Bildstein also ranked 13th in the Conference in steals (1.22/game) and averaged 2.5 rebounds and 1.2 assists per game. The other returning starter is frontcourt swingman **Tony Brantner**. Brantner averaged 9.3 points and a team-high 5.3 rebounds per game, ranking 25th in the Conference in points and 11th in rebounds. He also ranked ninth in blocked shots with a 0.82 block per game average. Post player **Norm Winn** should make an impact in the middle after averaging 6.8 points and 4.5 rebounds while starting 10 of 23 games last season. Winn also averaged 0.78 blocks per game to rank 10th in the league.

Luther head coach **Mark Franzen** says, "We are in our second year building the program here at Luther. Our returning players have improved and our first recruiting class is adjusting well to our system."

Simpson returns one starter and seven letterwinners from last season's 18-9 team that finished fourth in the Conference with a 10-6 record, but will have to reload after losing six of last year's top ten players to graduation. Junior forward **David Ferezy** is the lone returning starter. Ferezy split time between power forward and center and averaged 4.0 points and 4.5 rebounds per game. He also reset the single-season school record for blocks with 62. The Iowa Conference leader in the category, Ferezy ended the year ranked 14th in NCAA Division III with a 2.5 blocks per game average. Senior point guard **Brennen Tubaugh** and sophomore post **Tim Dunlavy** played in all 27 games last season. Tubaugh averaged 5.3 points per game to rank fifth on the team in scoring. Dunlavy ranked fourth with a 5.8 point per game average while also pulling down 3.2 rebounds per game.

Simpson head coach **Bruce Wilson** says, "The 2007-08 Storm will be an inexperienced team with the graduation of six of last season's top ten players. I will be interested in watching the improvement of the team as it has its early season experiences."

Wartburg returns three starters and 6 letterwinners from last season's 11-15 team that finished tied for sixth in the Conference with a 5-11 record. Forward/guard **Lee Nelson** is the Knights' top returning scorer, bringing back a 10.3 point per game average that ranked 19th in the Conference. Starting 19 of 26 games, Nelson proved to be a consistent threat from outside, hitting 39.7 percent (87-219) of his shots from the field and 40.4 percent (64-159) from outside the arc. Nelson ranked second in the IIAC in three-point field goals made (2.46/game) and seventh in three-point field goal percentage. He also finished third on the team with 57 assists and 24 steals. Junior guard **Cashes Mason** is the top returning field goal shooter for the Knights, ending last season ranked third in the league at 56.8 percent. Mason averaged 8.9 points per game. Forward/center **Danny Stark** started 14 of 26 games as a sophomore, hitting at or above 40 percent from the field (45.6 percent) and three-point arc (40.0 percent). Stark also hit 71.4 percent (40-56) from the charity stripe.

Wartburg head coach **Dick Peth** says, "The success of our team will be determined by how quickly our youth can make the transition to competing in our league. I have been very impressed with our leadership and effort this far in practice."