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## 2009-10 IOWA CONFERENCE MEN'S BASKETBALL PREVIEW

**CEDAR RAPIDS, IOWA . . .** Wartburg College, which finished fourth in the 2008-09 Iowa Conference men's basketball race is the coaches' pick to capture the 2009-10 IIAC men's basketball championship. The Knights received five of nine first-place votes (coaches cannot vote for their own teams), totaling 68 points in the IIAC Men's Basketball Coaches' Poll.

Central College picked up one first-place vote and is second with 63 points, while two-time defending champion Buena Vista University pulled down the third spot with two first-place votes and 56 points. 2009 IIAC Tournament Champion Cornell College picked up the remaining first-place vote and is fourth in the poll with 46 points. The complete 2009-10 IIAC Men's Basketball Coaches' Poll follows.

Rank	School (1st place votes)	Points	2008-09 Record
1	Wartburg (5)	68	(15-13, 8-8 IIAC)
2	Central (1)	63	(13-13, 7-9 IIAC)
3	Buena Vista (2)	56	(23-3, 15-1 IIAC)
4	Cornell (1)	46	(21-7, 12-4 IIAC)
5	Dubuque	40	(14-12, 7-9 IIAC)
6	Coe	35	(10-15, 6-10 IIAC)
	Luther	35	(7-17, 4-12 IIAC)
	Loras	35	(16-11, 10-6 IIAC)
9	Simpson	18	(7-18, 3-13 IIAC)

**Preseason Polls:** Buena Vista is among those receiving votes in the D3hoops.com preseason poll.

**Opening Weekend:** The 2009-10 Iowa Conference men's basketball season begins Sunday, November 15, as Buena Vista and Dubuque teams take to the hardwood. The Beavers travel to NCAA Division II Wayne State (Neb.), while the Spartans travel to Winona, Minn., to face Saint Mary's (Minn.). The 18-date Iowa Conference schedule begins Wednesday, December 2, with a full slate of four league games.

**New Coach:** **Chad Murray**, the top assistant and recruiting coordinator the past five years at North Central (Ill.) College, is the new head men's basketball coach at Cornell College. Murray takes over for **Mike DeGeorge**, who resigned after five seasons at the helm including a record-setting 2008-09 campaign in which the Rams qualified for the NCAA Division III Tournament. Murray spent the last eight years as an assistant coach at the Division III level with stints at Nebraska Wesleyan University (2001-02), Vassar (N.Y.) College (2002-04) and North Central (2004-09).

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

**Buena Vista** returns just five letterwinners and zero starters from last season's 23-3 team that won the Iowa Conference title for the sixth time in 10 years with a 15-1 league record. After losing their top five scorers and top six rebounders from a year ago, the Beavers will face a battle this season if they hope to maintain their place in the Iowa Conference standings. BVU will be led by a trio of seniors, each of whom saw action in all 26 games last season. Wing **Nate Parker** averaged 3.2 points, 1.8 rebounds, and 0.7 assists per game, while center **Steve Gute**, one of the league's tallest players at 7-0, averaged 3.0 points, 2.0 rebounds, and 0.3 assists. **Kevin Osborn** assumes the point guard position after posting averages of 1.4 points, 1.0 rebounds, and 1.0 assists per game a year ago. Sophomore guard **Jeff Janssen** is BVU's top returning scorer at 5.7 points per game.

Buena Vista head coach **Brian Van Haften** says, "We are really excited about our season. We have good quality depth at all positions, and have good balance inside and out. Our seniors have been tremendous with their leadership, and we hope to improve as the year moves forward."

**Central** return all five starters and 10 letterwinners from last season's 13-13 team that finished tied for fifth in the Conference with a 7-9 record. The Dutch will be led in the back court by guard **Miguel Ley**. Ley, a First Team All-Iowa Conference pick, was the league's leading scorer last season, averaging 17.4 points per game. Ley also ranked fourth in the league in assists (2.96/game), fifth in steals (1.50/game), sixth in free-throw percentage (79.8 percent), 13<sup>th</sup> in field goal percentage (44.7 percent). Senior post player **Loren Liming** will anchor the Central front line. Liming, an Honorable Mention all-league pick, ranked fourth in the league in blocks at 1.42 per game, fifth in the league in rebounds at 6.3 and 13<sup>th</sup> in scoring at 12.0. Senior forward **Mark Holan** ranked third in the league in steals at 1.72 per game and 11<sup>th</sup> in free-throw percentage at 74.3 percent. Senior center **Zach Cooper** ranked second in the IIAC in blocked shots at 1.77 per game.

Central head coach **Mike Boschee** says, "We have a good group of guys that are always fun to coach. Within that core group are lot of returning players that understand the challenges of the Iowa Conference. It should be another exciting year of college basketball."

**Coe** returns three starters and seven letterwinners from last season's 10-15 team that finished seventh in the Conference with a 6-10 record. Junior guard **Alex Tatman**, a Second Team All-Iowa Conference selection a year ago, was the Kohawks leading scorer with 13.0 points per game while starting all 25 games. He ranked 10<sup>th</sup> in the league in scoring and second in free throw percentage at 86.1 percent. Tatman will be joined in the backcourt by senior **Cass Behrens**, who averaged 6.6 points and 3.0 rebounds per game last season. Like Tatman, Behrens also started all 25 games a year ago. He also ranked 13<sup>th</sup> in the league with 1.96 assists per game. Junior post **Dan Borngraeber** started nine games last season, chipping in with 7.3 points and 3.5 rebounds per game.

Coe head coach **Pat Juckem** says, "The Iowa Conference appears to be as balanced as it's been in several years. A tremendous group of seniors graduated this spring throughout the league which will allow the next group of conference leaders to emerge. Our team returns as a more physically mature and emotionally mature group. We believe we have a group that can potentially be highly competitive if they continue to commit to playing the right way."

**Cornell** returns all three starters and 11 letterwinners from last season's 21-7 team that finished second in the Conference, captured the IIAC Tournament title and advanced to the NCAA Division III Men's Basketball Championship. Senior center **Chris Handke**, a Second Team All-Conference selection last season, is the Rams' top returning scorer at 9.8 points per game. He was also Cornell's top rebounder and shot-blocker with a season-season Cornell record 45 blocks and a 6.3 rebound per game average. Handke's 1.61 block per game average and 57.0% field-goal percentage both ranked third in the league, while his rebounding average ranked sixth. Senior forward **Riley Larson** averaged 8.9 points and 4.4 rebounds per game in 24 starts a year ago. He also blocked 29 shots and hit 24 3-point field goals. Larson averaged 1.04 blocks per game, to rank fifth in the league. Senior forward **Matt Lewis** started two games off the bench last season, averaging 4.1 points and 2.4 rebounds per game. Junior guard **Corey Dieser** started 25 games last season with 3.1 points and 1.8 rebounds per game, 57 assists, and 24 steals. Dieser's 2.04 assist per game average ranked 12<sup>th</sup> in the league.

Cornell head coach **Chad Murray** says, "Our players have embraced the coaching change wonderfully and have worked extremely hard in the off season to make sure they build off of last year's success. I think we will get a lot out of Chris Handke and Riley Larson inside and I'm excited to see who will step up to be a third consistent scorer for us."

**Dubuque** returns three starters and five letterwinners from last season's 14-12 team that tied for fifth in the Conference with a 7-9 record. Junior point guard **Taylor Blum** was the Spartans' leading scorer last season, ranking sixth in league with a 15.0 point-per-game average. He also ranked third in the league in free-throw percentage at 85.4 percent, ninth in assists at 2.19 per game, and 10<sup>th</sup> in steals with 1.23 per game. Senior guard **Josh Bellaire** ranked seventh in the league in assists at 2.35, eighth in field-goal percentage at 48.4 percent, and 14<sup>th</sup> in scoring at 11.6 points per game.

Dubuque head coach **Robbie Sieverding** says, "In order for our team to be successful in the Iowa Conference we will need great leadership from our returners. We are looking forward to what should be another highly competitive Iowa Conference season. We hope to be playing our best basketball late into the season."

**Loras** returns one starter and six letterwinners from last season's 16-11 team that finished third in the Conference with a 10-6 record. Senior forward **Jason Abbuhl** is the lone returning starter, back after averaging 5.7 points and 5.4 rebounds per game, ranking second on the team and 12<sup>th</sup> in the league in rebounds. **Alex Brant** started one game, averaging 5.3 points and 3.7 rebounds per game. He also led the team with 11 blocks and ranked second in steals with 20.

Loras head coach **Greg Gorton** says, "After losing five of our top seven players and our top four scorers, we have a lot of unanswered questions."

**Luther** returns two starters and nine letterwinners from last year's 7-17 team that finished eighth in the Conference with a 4-12 league mark. The Norse return six of their top seven scorers from last season but will need to replace their top two rebounders and top two assist men. Junior forward **Nnamdi Okolue** and sophomore guards **Dan Larson** and **Tim Merritt** return to lead the Norse. Okolue started 22 games in 2008-09, averaging 6.8 points, 4.9 rebounds, and 0.6 assists per game. Okolue ranked 17<sup>th</sup> in the league in rebounds. Larson added 6.6 points, 1.0 rebounds, and 1.2 assists per contest, and Merritt averaged 6.3 points, 2.3 rebounds, and 0.9 assists.

Luther head coach **Mark Franzen** says, "This recruiting class has added size and skill to our roster. Many of our returning players have played since their freshman year and have gained valuable experience. We are confident in the upward direction we are going."

**Simpson** returns three starters and six letterwinners from last season's 7-18 team that finished ninth in the Conference with a 3-13 record. Simpson has one of the top post players in the league to rely on in senior center **Tim Dunlavy**. Dunlavy was named First Team All-Iowa Conference for the second consecutive year after leading the Storm in scoring (16.2 ppg), rebounding (6.8 rpg), field-goal shooting (48.4), and made field goals (149). He ranked fourth in the league in scoring, fourth in rebounding, ninth in field-goal percentage, eighth in free throw percentage (77.0 percent), and 11<sup>th</sup> in steals (1.2 spg). Senior guard **Andrew Dau** ranked third on the team in scoring, averaging 6.9 points per game. He also ranked third on the team in field goals made with 63 and second in assists with 44. Sophomore guard **Zack Barragan** was fifth on the team in scoring at 5.5 points per game.

Simpson head coach **Bruce Wilson** says, "We look forward to having a blend of 5 returnees that logged quite a few minutes last season and some Junior Varsity players and newcomers that are competing for varsity minutes. We have had a good start to our practices and the team is coming together well."

**Wartburg** returns three starters and 11 letterwinners from last season's 15-13 team that finished fourth in the Conference with an 8-8 record. Senior forward **Kelly McCarville**, a Second Team All-Conference selection, was the team's leading scorer in 2008-09, averaging 11.6 points per game. He led the league in field-goal percentage at 63.7 percent, narrowly missing the program's single-season record of 65.7%. McCarville is also the top returning rebounder at 6.0 per game and led the team in steals with 32 (1.14/game), averages that ranked 10<sup>th</sup> and 13<sup>th</sup> in the IIAC, respectively. Sophomore guard **Cole Danielson**, an Honorable Mention All-Iowa Conference pick, was the team's second-leading scorer last season at 10.8 point per game and is the top returning 3-point shooter in the league, hitting 63 of 151 attempts (41.7 percent). Senior forward **Mitch Eslick** added 6.8 points per game last season and ranked second on the team in three-pointers made with 34.

Wartburg head coach **Dick Peth** says, "Our practices have been very competitive thus far. Our progress appears to be further along this year due to a large nucleus of returning players. We look forward to competing in the highly competitive Iowa Conference."