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2010 IOWA CONFERENCE VOLLEYBALL PREVIEW

CEDAR RAPIDS, IOWA . . . Wartburg College, which made a 13.5-game improvement in overall record from 2008 to 2009 and tied for second place in the Iowa Intercollegiate Athletic Conference (IIAC) volleyball standings in 2009, is the coaches' pick to win the 2010 IIAC title. The Knights received five first-place votes, totaling 66 points in the IIAC Volleyball Coaches' Poll.

Luther College, which finished 26-12 overall to post its best record since 1993 and advanced to the NCAA Division III Volleyball Championship for the first time in school history, collected two first-place votes and is second with 58 points, just ahead of 2009 IIAC regular season and tournament champion **Simpson College** (56) and 2008 league champion **Loras College** (54). Both the Storm and Duhawks received one first-place vote. The complete 2010 IIAC Volleyball Coaches' Poll follows.

Rank	School (1st place votes)	Points	2009 Record
1	Wartburg (5)	66	18-17, 6-2 IIAC
2	Luther (2)	58	26-12, 6-2 IIAC
3	Simpson (1)	56	21-14, 7-1 IIAC
4	Loras (1)	54	13-21, 5-3 IIAC
5	Central	48	22-12, 4-4 IIAC
6	Cornell	44	23-9, 5-3 IIAC
7	Coe	28	9-25, 1-7 IIAC
8	Dubuque	22	9-17, 2-6 IIAC
9	Buena Vista	20	2-29, 0-8 IIAC

New Coaches: **Cindy Fredrick** is the new coach at Luther. A veteran with 23 seasons of head coaching experience at the NCAA Division I level, Fredrick comes to Decorah after spending the last two years as Assistant Director of the Wartburg-Waverly Sports and Wellness Center. Prior to that Fredrick led programs at Weber State (1985-89), Washington State (1989-2004) and Iowa (2004-08). She replaces **Jane Gibbs**.

2009 Schedule: The 2009 schedule opens Wednesday, Sept. 1, with five schools in action. Central is at Grinnell, Knox at Coe, Monmouth (Ill.) at Cornell, Clarke at Dubuque, and Wartburg opens at Mount Mercy. The 2010 Iowa Conference schedule opens with two matches Tuesday, Sept. 7 – Coe at Cornell and Luther at Loras – and two others Wednesday, Sept. 8 – Buena Vista at Dubuque and Wartburg at Simpson. Central has a bye during the opening week of league play.

Conference Tournament: The top six teams following the regular season round-robin schedule qualify for the 2010 Iowa Conference Tournament with an automatic berth in the NCAA Tournament on the line. The IIAC Tournament is November 5-6, hosted by the top seed.

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



Buena Vista University Beavers
2-29 overall, 0-8 IIAC (9th)

Head Coach (season): Heather Noll (3rd)
Record at School (yrs): 9-51 (2)
Career Record (yrs): same

IIAC Titles (last): n/a
IIAC Tourney Titles (last): n/a

Starters returning/lost – 5 / 3
Letterwinners returning/lost – 13 / 2
All-IIAC players returning – 1 (Vondrak)
All-IIAC hon. mention returning – 0



Central College Dutch
22-12 overall, 4-4 IIAC (6th)

Head Coach (season): Kent Clayberg (8th)
Record at School (yrs): 174-75 (7)
Career Record (yrs): same

IIAC Titles (last): 17 (2007)
IIAC Tourney Titles (last): 10 (2007)

Starters returning/lost – 4 + libero / 2
Letterwinners returning/lost – 13 / 5
All-IIAC players returning – 1 (Grieger)
All-IIAC hon. mention returning – 0

Buena Vista returns five starters and 13 letterwinners from last season's 2-29 team that finished ninth in the Conference with an 0-8 record. The Beavers, who have their top six offensive players back, will be led by senior middle **Katie Vondrak**, an honorable mention all-league pick last season after two seasons on the second team. Vondrak led BVU in kills (2.43 per set) and blocks (0.85 per set). Another asset up the middle will be junior **Kacie Woodley**, who ranked second on the team in blocks (0.73/set) and fourth in kills (1.49/set). Junior outside hitter **Lacie Drennan** came on strong at the end of the year, finishing with 77 kills in 55 sets to rank fifth on the team with a 1.40 per set average. Senior **McKenzie Moore**, second on the team in kills as an outside hitter in 2009, will step in at libero this season, providing key leadership and improved ball control for the Beavers.

Buena Vista head coach **Heather Noll** says, "We look for a stronger year for our team. Our returners are coming back stronger and our incoming class is the strongest we have had yet. With a fresh vision and motivation to move up in the conference, we are anxiously waiting to get started. As for our conference, we have a competitive conference and every year there are upsets and battles at the end for a spot in the conference tournament; I know we will see that again this year."

Central returns five starters and 13 letterwinners from last season's 22-12 team that placed sixth in the IIAC with a 4-4 record. Junior setter **Maggie Snyder** returns, having ranked third in the league with a 9.4 assist per set average last year in her first season as a starter. Junior libero **Chelsea Grieger**, already a two-year starter and a 2009 second team all-league pick, is back after averaging a league-leading 5.95 digs per set and leading the squad in service aces (38) a year ago, a total that also ranked eighth in the IIAC. Right-side hitter **Ashley Ellingson** is back for her senior season after averaging 2.24 kills and 1.57 digs last year. Also returning with significant varsity experience are middle hitters **Kiley Meyers** and **Haley Brillhart**, as well as outside hitters **Amy Golly** and **Caitlin Kouba**. Meyers ranked second in the league in attack percentage (.287) while Brillhart ranked sixth (.274).

Central head coach **Kent Clayberg** says, "We'll enter into this season a much more experience squad than a year ago. We're very excited about where we're going. We've got a group that absolutely buys in to the identity of this team – they're working very hard, and they're hungry to restore the Central legacy."

"I like where the Iowa Conference is going," Clayberg continued. "We have several programs on the rise that will bring our league back to the forefront of NCAA prominence. Strengthening our depth is good for everybody. It's hard to pick a favorite heading into the year, but I expect Simpson to be competitive and both Wartburg and Luther had strong young teams a year ago. Loras and Cornell have both been making some positive strides as well. The league is full of very good coaches with talented squads – this will be a fun season."



Coe College Kohawks
9-25 overall, 1-7 IIAC (8th)

Head Coach (season): DeAnn Woodin (5th)
Record at School (yrs): 59-75 (4)
Career Record (yrs): same

IIAC Titles (last): n/a
IIAC Tourney Titles (last): n/a

Starters returning/lost – 6 / 1
Letterwinners returning/lost – 9 / 1
All-IIAC players returning – 1 (Steffens)
All-IIAC hon. mention returning – 0

Coe returns six starters and nine letterwinners from last season's 9-25 team that finished eighth in the league with a 1-7 mark. Junior outside hitter **Molly Steffens** was a second team all-IIAC pick in 2009 after ranking fourth in the league in kills with a 3.34 per set average. She also ranked 10th in digs with a 3.66 digs per set average. Junior middle blocker **Kaitlin McClimon** joined Steffens among the league's offensive leaders, ranking sixth in the league with a 3.08 kill-per-set average. Back to facilitate the offense will be sophomore setter **Emily Ryan**. Ryan ranked second in the IIAC in service aces with 46 and was seventh in assists with an 8.75 assist-per-set average. Sophomore libero **Brittany Shickell** averaged 4.06 digs per set last season to rank eighth in the league.

Coe head coach **DeAnn Woodin** says, "The Kohawks are looking forward to another tough and exciting conference schedule this fall! Our team is ready for the challenges and fun ahead, as we return several young starters and will see some positive contributions from the newcomers. The high level of talent and competitiveness of the IIAC makes each match very entertaining, and as usual, either team can win on any given night."



Cornell College Rams
23-9 overall, 5-3 IIAC (t-4th)

Head Coach (season): Jeff Meeker (9th)
Record at school: 133-130 (8)
Career Record (yrs): 194-195 (11)

IIAC Titles (last): n/a
IIAC Tourney Titles (last): n/a

Starters returning/lost – 4 / 2+ libero
Letterwinners returning/lost – 8 / 6
All-IIAC Players returning – 0
All-IIAC hon. mention returning – 1
(Boehmer)

Cornell returns four starters and eight letterwinners from last season's 23-9 team that finished tied for fourth in the Conference with a 5-3 record. The Rams will need to fill the shoes of 2009 Iowa Conference MVP Laura Dudgeon and two-time all conference pick Kristin Paczosa, but have a very capable floor general returning in senior setter **Hannah Boehmer**. Boehmer, twice named All-IIAC honorable mention, ranked second in the league in assists per game (9.63) and fifth in service aces (0.35 per set). **Morgan May**, **Alissa Benjamin**, and **Suzi Enoch** ranked third through fifth on the team last season in kills. May, a sophomore middle hitter, hammered down 197 kills and ranked eighth in the league with a .255 attack percentage. She also ranked second on the blocks with 48. Benjamin, a senior outside hitter, added 183 kills and 41 blocks, while Enoch, a senior right-side hitter, posted 131 kills, 28 service aces, 64 digs, and 25 blocks.

Cornell head coach **Jeff Meeker** says, "Cornell is anxious to get the season underway. I am very excited about our team as we bring back a core of experience and some talented newcomers. I see the conference race as being wide open with team more evenly matched top to bottom. It should be another great year of Iowa Conference volleyball."



University of Dubuque Spartans
9-17 overall, 2-6 IIAC (7th)

Head Coach (season): April Elsbernd (2nd)
Record at School (yrs): 9-17 (1)
Career Record (yrs): 24-39 (2)

IIAC Titles (last): 2 (1995)
IIAC Tourney Titles (last): 2 (1995)

Starters returning/lost – 5 / 1
Letterwinners returning/lost – 7 / 5
All-IIAC players returning – 0
All-IIAC hon. mention returning – 2
(Mortensen, Green-2008)



Loras College Duhawks
13-21 overall, 5-3 IIAC (t-4th)

Head Coach (season): Teresa Kehe (5th)
Record at School (yrs): 78-62 (4)
Career Record (yrs): same

IIAC Titles (last): 1 (2008)
IIAC Tourney Titles (last): 2 (2008)

Starters returning/lost – 5 / 2+libero
Letterwinners returning/lost – 7 / 6
All-IIAC players returning – 2
(Westermeyer, Lord)
All-IIAC hon. mention returning – 1
(Murphy-2008)

Dubuque returns five starters and seven letterwinners from last season's 9-17 team that finished seventh in the Conference with a 2-6 record. A strong starting corps will be led by a pair of All-Iowa Conference honorable mention players – junior right-side hitter **Carly Green** and junior libero **Kristin Mortensen**. Green, a 2008 pick, ranked second on the team with 204 kills and posted a team-high 51 blocks. Mortensen, a 2009 pick, averaged 5.56 digs per set to rank third in the IIAC and ranked second on the team with 28 service aces. Sophomore middle blocker/outside hitter **Susan Danielewski** ranked third on the team in kills (151) and digs (196).

Carly Green (RS, 6-1, Jr., 2008 Honorable Mention All-IIAC), Kristin Mortensen (L, 5-3, Jr., 2009 Honorable Mention All-IIAC), Susan Danielewski (MB/OH, 5-9, So.)

Dubuque head coach **April Elsbernd** says, "It should be a very interesting and exciting year in the Iowa Conference after many teams lost impact players to graduation this past spring. Just as in the last couple years, I assume there will be a lot of parity between programs. At UD we're excited to have more depth than last year; and we'll be returning a strong group of leaders."

Loras returns five starters and seven letterwinners from last season's 13-21 team that tied for fourth in the Conference with a 5-3 mark. Sophomore middle blocker **Brittney Westermeyer**, a first team all-league pick as a freshman in 2009, led the Duhawks in kills last season with 334 and ranked eighth in the league with a .268 attack percentage while adding 116 total blocks. Senior outside hitter **Julianne Lord** ranked second on the team with 286 kills and was second on the team in digs with 371. Sophomore outside hitter **Regan Riley** was third on the team in kills (225) and service aces (18) and fourth in digs (326). Junior setter Julie Rogers ranked fourth in the league in digs after averaging 9.25 per set last season. She also ranked second on the team in service aces with 28 and third in digs with 339.

Loras head coach **Teresa Kehe** says, "We are looking forward to another exciting season in the always competitive IIAC. At Loras, we hope to build upon our efforts of last season and strive to meet the challenges both conference and regional action will provide us. The experience and leadership we return to the team should prove to be very beneficial to our program and our path to improvement."



Luther College Norse
26-12 overall, 6-2 IIAC (t-2nd)

Head Coach (season): Cindy Fredrick (1st)
Record at School (yrs): first season
Career Record (yrs): 410-324 (23)

IIAC Titles (last): n/a
IIAC Tourney Titles (last): n/a

Starters returning/lost – 2 / 4
Letterwinners returning/lost – 6 / 6
All-IIAC players returning – 0
All-IIAC hon. mention returning – 0

Luther returns two starters and six letterwinners from last season's 26-12 team that tied for second in the Conference with a 6-2 mark and advanced to the NCAA Division III Volleyball Championship for the first time in school history. Senior **Taylor Hjerleid** became the starting setter midway through 2009, recording 905 assists to move into 10th all-time at Luther. Her 8.86-assist-per-game average ranked fifth in the league. She also tallied 44 kills, 18 service aces, 314 digs, and 20 blocks. Junior setter **Amanda Dietel** saw action in 45 sets last season, posting 347 assists, 26 kills and 7 service aces. Junior defensive specialist **Lindsey Weaver** recorded 381 digs and 22 service aces in 2009 and enters 2010 in eighth place on Luther's career digs list with 712. Senior middle hitter **Emily Ellson** led the Iowa Conference in service aces last season with 54. She paired that with 113 kills and 77 blocks.

Luther head coach **Cindy Fredrick** says, "We will be in a building year with several new players seeing action this year. We may take some time to gel, with a new system and a young team. The Iowa Conference is very strong with several teams having the talent and experience to win on any given night"



Simpson College Storm
21-14 overall, 7-1 IIAC (champion)

Head Coach (season): Lana Smith (12th)
Record at School (yrs): 221-161 (11)
Career Record (yrs): same

IIAC Titles (last): 8 (2009)
IIAC Tourney Titles (last): 6 (2007)

Starters returning/lost – 3 / 3+libero
Letterwinners returning/lost – 13 / 6
All-IIAC players returning – 1 (Schuster)
All-IIAC hon. mention returning – 0

Simpson returns three starters and 13 letterwinners from last season's 21-14 team that captured the school's eighth volleyball title with a 7-1 league mark and advanced to the NCAA Division III Volleyball Championship. The Storm graduated four All-Iowa Conference players from last year's squad but have a trio of hitters ready to step up to the net and make an impact. Junior middle **Megan Dunlavy** finished third on the team with 340 kills but was third in the league with a .287 hitting percentage. She also ranked second on the team with 67 blocks. Senior outside hitter **Amy Schuster**, a two-time second team all-league pick before being named honorable mention in 2009, ranked fourth on the team with 307 kills and 231 digs, second in service aces with 39, and third in blocks with 55. Sophomore outside hitter **McKaylie Croghan** added 153 kills, 53 assists, 31 service aces, 193 digs, and 48 blocks. Senior defensive specialist/libero **Monica Driscoll** will step into the starting lineup to fill the void left by recent graduate Brittany Friesth. In 2009, Driscoll played in 72 sets accumulating 87 digs, 3 kills, 5 assists, and 4 service aces. Another hole to be filled is at setter where four-time all-conference selection and honorable mention all-American **Tara Christensen** has graduated.

Simpson head coach **Lana Smith** says, "Heading into the 2010 season we will have some big shoes to fill. However, we have some outstanding returners and talented newcomers ready to compete on any given night. We hope to rise to the challenge and improve our team play as the season develops. This will be another exciting year with lots of talent in the Iowa Conference."



Wartburg College Knights
26-12 overall, 6-2 IIAC (t-2nd)

Head Coach (season): Jennifer Walker (13th)
Record at School (yrs): 259-166 (12)
Career Record (yrs): 262-189 (13)

IIAC Titles (last): 1 (2002)
IIAC Tourney Titles (last): 2 (2003)

Starters returning/lost – 7 / 3
Letterwinners returning/lost – 7 / 4
All-IIAC players returning – 2 (Sieck, Swift)
All-IIAC hon. mention returning –

Wartburg returns seven starters and seven letterwinners from last season's 26-12 team that tied for second in the Conference with a 6-2 record. Sophomore **Britlyn Sieck**, a first team all-IIAC and honorable mention all-region pick, posted a team-high 469 kills in her first collegiate season, averaging 3.61 kills per set to ranking second in the Conference behind 2009 MVP Laura Dudgeon (3.71). She also posted 156 digs and was third on the team with 59 blocks. Second team all-IIAC selection **Sofie Swift**, junior middle blocker, led the team and ranked fourth in the league with a .275 attack percentage. She also posted a team-high 119 blocks. Junior setter **Britney Hermesen** ranked second in the league in total assists with 1,218 and sixth in per-set average at 8.83. She also ranked third on the team with 353 digs while adding 94 kills and nine service aces. Junior defensive specialist/libero Nicole Beer was second on the team with 438 digs and added 144 kills, 80 assists, and 18 service aces.

Wartburg head coach **Jennifer Walker** says, "The Wartburg volleyball team is looking forward to an exciting year. Our team will be young in age but not in experience. Our first-year players are coming in with a lot of club and high school experience. In addition to that, all of our returning players have varsity playing experience, most of who were starters. This group has talent, and will get stronger with experience as the season progresses. The challenge will be for us, as coaches, to develop them into the team we know they can be.

"If the Iowa Conference has shown us anything in the last few years, it's that any team can win on any given night. It doesn't matter where teams are picked in the pre-season poll, every team is going for the win when they play their conference games. Every week will be competitive and challenging again this year.