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2009-10 IOWA CONFERENCE WOMEN'S BASKETBALL PREVIEW

CEDAR RAPIDS, IOWA . . . Two-time defending IIAC champion Simpson College collected six of nine first-places votes to capture the top spot in the 2009-10 IIAC Women's Basketball Coaches' Poll. The Storm, a participant in the 2009 NCAA Division III Women's Basketball Championship, received 68 of the maximum 72 points (coaches cannot vote for their own team).

Loras College edged both Buena Vista University and Wartburg College by a 58-55 margin. All three schools earned a first-place vote. Luther College and Coe College tied for fifth with 45 points each. The complete 2009-10 IIAC Women's Basketball Coaches' Poll follows.

Rank	School (1st place votes)	Points	2008-09 Record
1	Simpson (6)	68	(24-4, 14-2 IIAC)
2	Loras (1)	58	(16-11, 10-6 IIAC)
3	Buena Vista (1)	55	(18-9, 10-6 IIAC)
	Wartburg (1)	55	(16-11, 10-6 IIAC)
5	Luther	45	(10-15, 9-7 IIAC)
	Coe	45	(14-12, 8-8 IIAC)
7	Dubuque	29	(9-16, 5-11 IIAC)
8	Central	21	(8-17, 4-12 IIAC)
9	Cornell	19	(7-17, 2-14 IIAC)

Preseason Polls: Simpson is ranked 25th by the Women's Basketball Coaches Association (WBCA) and receiving votes in the D3hoops.com preseason poll.

Preseason All-American: Buena Vista senior guard **Margo Muhlbauer** (Manilla, Iowa/IKM) was named to the D3hoops.com Preseason All-America Third Team. She is a three-time First Team All-Conference pick.

Opening Weekend: The 2009-10 Iowa Conference women's basketball season tips off Sunday, November 15, with a pair of schools beginning play. Cornell hosts Grinnell, while Wartburg hosts St. Thomas (Minn.). The 18-date IIAC schedule begins Wednesday, December 2, with a complete slate of four games.

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

Buena Vista returns all three starters and ten letterwinners from last season's 18-9 team that finished tied for second in the Conference with a 10-6 record. Senior guard **Margo Muhlbauer**, a three-time First Team All-Iowa Conference selection, led the Iowa Conference in scoring for the second year in a row with a 19.5 point-per-game average. She also averaged 5.3 rebounds, 2.0 steals, and 1.8 assists per game, leading the league in free-throw percentage (90.1) and ranking in the top-15 in steals (fifth), field-goal percentage, and rebounding (both 13th). Muhlbauer is joined in the backcourt by senior guard **Jen Allen**. Allen averaged 4.1 points, 1.7 rebounds, and 2.3 assists per game, ranking 14th in the IIAC in assists. Senior forward/center **Aubrey Hauswirth** and junior forward **Jocelyn Kock** should lead the Beavers up front. Hauswirth played in all 27 games last season, averaging 8.6 points, 4.3 rebounds, and 0.9 assists, while Kock added 4.0 points, 3.1 rebounds, and 1.1 assists off the bench.

Buena Vista head coach **Janet Berry** says, "We graduated six seniors last year but have six very committed seniors this season. The key for us will be how quickly we can figure out people's roles. Our team has been really working hard and is looking forward to competing in the IIAC."

Central returns two starters and nine letterwinners from last season's 8-17 team that finished eighth in the Conference with a 4-12 record. Senior point guard **Ashley Gerst** should provide leadership and experience, entering her third year as a starter after averaging 8.0 points and 2.5 assists last season. Junior post **Andrea Clark**, a Second Team All-IIAC selection in 2008, averaged 8.2 points and a team-high 6.8 rebounds per game, blocking 24 shots. One of Central's top free throw shooters, she ranked 12th in the league shooting at a 77.6 percent clip. Sophomore guard **Sarah Paulson**, a two-time IIAC MVP in women's golf, was Central's second-leading scorer last season, averaging 10.0 points per game. She also added 4.2 rebounds per game and was tops on the team in 3-point goals with 30.

Central head coach **Jerry Nikkel** says, "The Central Dutch are looking to improve the progress in the program that was started last season. With nine returning letter winners and several promising newcomers, the Dutch are setting their sights on a conference tournament berth at the end of the season."

Coe returns three starters and 10 letterwinners from last year's 14-12 team that finished sixth in the Conference with an 8-8 record. The Kohawk offense will run through junior guard **Sarah Anciaux**, a two-time Second Team All-Conference selection last season. Anciaux averaged 10.5 points, 5.6 rebounds, 4.6 assists, and 1.9 steals. She ranked second in the Conference in assists, third in assist-to-turnover ratio, fifth in free-throw percentage (83.3 percent), and tenth in rebounding. Junior forward **Kayla Lincoln** started 24 of 26 games last season, averaging 10.2 points, 5.0 rebounds, and 2.3 assists, while also shooting 44.8 percent from the field. Guard/forward **Kayla Waskow** averaged 9.8 points and 3.2 rebounds through nine games last season before being sidelined with an injury.

Coe head coach **Randi Peterson** says, "I am anxious to start our season. Our kids have worked hard over the summer and it is showing up. With a solid returning group, I think our ability to compete in an already tough conference will improve."

Cornell returns four starters and six letterwinners from last season's 7-18 team that finished ninth in the Conference with a 2-14 record. Senior forward **Kristin Paczosa**, an Honorable Mention All-IIAC pick, was the league's leading rebounder last year, averaging 8.7 per game. She also averaged 9.5 points and added 32 assists, 32 steals, and 22 blocked shots. Sophomore forward **Teresa Cecchetti** ranked second on the team in scoring last season after averaging 10.3 points per game. She also averaged 6.2 rebounds per game and registered 50 assists, 28 steals, and 21 blocks. Cecchetti ranked 19th in the league in scoring and fifth in rebounds. The return of forward **Alicia West** to the lineup after missing the entire 2008-09 season with a knee injury should help with the team's depth.

Cornell head coach **Brent Brase** says, "The coaches and players are working hard to build a culture within the program which will lead to long-term, sustained success."

Dubuque returns all five starters and 10 letterwinners from last season's 9-16 team that finished seventh in the Conference with a 5-11 record. The Spartans return seven of their top eight scorers from last year's team and will be led by a trio of seniors – guards **Jennifer Nichols** and **Krystal Parr** and forward **Katelyn Herrman**. Nichols, a First Team All-Conference selection, was the league's third-leading scorer at 15.4 points per game. She also ranked fourth in the IIAC in free-throw percentage (84.3 percent), 11th in steals (1.88), 12th in 3-point field goal percentage (34.4 percent), and rebounding (5.3 per game). Parr started all 25 games last season, ranking third on the team in scoring at 8.4 points per game. She also tied for sixth in the league in 3-point field goals per game (2.12) and was 13th in 3-point field goal percentage (33.8 percent). Herrman added 7.0 points and 5.0 rebounds per game, while sophomore center **Heather Taylor** added 6.0 points and 4.1 rebounds per game.

Dubuque head coach **Mark Noll** says, "We are excited about our team this season! We feel that we have the right blend of experience and talent this year to help us reach our goals! We are playing a very tough non-conference schedule to prepare us for the always competitive IIAC."

Loras returns four starters and seven letterwinners from last season's 16-11 team that finished third in the Conference with a 10-6 record. The Duhawks return four of their top five scorers from last season, including senior shooting guard **Lindsay Bava**, a two-time First Team All-Conference honoree. Bava ranked second in the league in scoring with an 18.9 point per game average while also contributing 4.9 rebounds, 2.5 assists, and 1.6 steals per game. One of the league's more accurate shooters, she ranked second in the IIAC in free-throw percentage (88.6 percent) and ranked eighth in 3-point field-goal percentage (39.9 percent). Senior point guard **Lisa Morrissey** averaged 8.2 points, 6.1 assists, and 2.96 steals, leading the IIAC in the latter two categories. Junior small forward **Sarah Pillon** ranked second on the team in scoring (13.5 ppg) while also contributing 3.3 rebounds per game. She also ranked second on the team with 55 assists.

Loras head coach **Justin Heinzen** says, "We have a balanced mix of experience and youth and the atmosphere is changing in the program for the better. The competitiveness and depth of this team creates a lot of high energy situations on the court and expectations are growing with the addition to new faces on staff and in uniform. How we mesh in the early going will be important in preparing for the nightly battles in the IIAC."

Luther returns three starters and 10 letterwinners from last season's 10-15 team that finished fifth in the Conference with a 9-7 record. The Norse will be led by senior guard **Marci Furlong**, who averaged 9.3 points, 3.8 rebounds, and 2.0 assists per game. Junior guard **Camille Stenhaus**, a Second Team All-Conference pick last season, was Luther's second-leading scorer (10.8 ppg). She also contributed 3.8 rebounds and 1.6 assists per game. Junior forward **Sam Jewell**, an Honorable Mention pick, started all 25 games a year ago, averaging 10.3 points, 6.0 rebounds, and 2.1 assists per game. She led the team in both rebounds (150) and assists (53).

Luther head coach **Jane Hildebrand** says, "We are looking forward to a very interesting conference season. There are a lot of teams that could vie for the top spots in the league. The parity in the league will have teams battling in every competition. One of our challenges will be our depth. We will need to develop some of our younger players so they can step up and carry some of the load. Our returners are ready to compete and excited about the upcoming year."

Simpson returns one starter and nine letterwinners from last year's 24-4 team that won the program's eighth Iowa Conference title and advanced to the NCAA Division III Women's Basketball Championship for the fifth consecutive year. The only returning starter is junior guard **Amy Hamilton**. Hamilton, a Second Team All-Conference pick, averaged 10.4 points and 1.6 rebounds per game in 28 games. Hamilton led the league in 3-point field goal percentage (49.6 percent) and was second in 3-pointers made (2.50 per game). As accurate as she was behind the 3-point line, Hamilton was just as accurate overall, hitting 49.0 percent of her shots to rank ninth. Senior guard **Katie Kitzman** also played in all 28 games last season, starting 13. She averaged 8.5 points and 1.8 rebounds per game and ranked 12th in the IIAC in steals with 1.86 per-game average. Sophomore center **Stacy Schutjer** added 7.2 points and 4.8 rebounds in 28 games last season. Schutjer also ranked 14th in the IIAC in free throw percentage, hitting at a 74.4 percent clip.

Simpson head coach **Brian Niemuth** says, "I'm excited about what we can accomplish this year. We lost a great group of seniors but have some excellent returners and transfers who are ready to battle right away. Our returners worked really hard in the off-season and we are looking forward to the challenges ahead. I believe the conference will be very balanced top to bottom."

Wartburg returns four starters and 12 letterwinners from last season's 16-11 team that tied for second in the Conference with a 10-6 record and reached the IIAC Tournament Championship game for the third time in five years. The Knights will be led by junior guard **Samantha Harrington** and senior point guard **Hollie Silvey**. Harrington, a Second Team All-Conference selection last season, is Wartburg's top returning scorer after averaging 13.3 points per game to rank ninth in the league. She also set a Wartburg single-season record for made 3-point field goals (71), tied for the team lead in steals (43) and ranked third on the team in assists (54). Silvey ranked sixth in the league in assists, averaging 2.73 per game. Junior guard **Abbey Hempfen** also returns after averaging 9.5 points per game. She ranked eighth in the IIAC in 3-pointers per game (2.04) and ninth in 3-point field goal percentage (.385).

Wartburg head coach **Bob Amsberry** says, "Experience, balance, and depth are luxuries that our team is enjoying this year and our finish in the conference will be dependent upon how well we utilize those strengths. The parity in the IIAC was very evident last year and that balance will be even greater this year."