



222 Third Street SE Ste. 423
Cedar Rapids, Iowa 52401
[Phone] (319) 366-4845
[Fax] (319) 366-4911
www.iowaconference.com

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Contact: Will Wolper
wwolper@iowaconference.com
319-366-4845

2006-07 IOWA CONFERENCE MEN'S BASKETBALL PREVIEW

CEDAR RAPIDS, IOWA . . . Coe College, which earned a share of its first Iowa Intercollegiate Athletic Conference (IIAC) men's basketball title last year, is the coaches' pick to repeat as the 2006-07 IIAC Champions. The Kohawks received six of nine first-place votes, totaling 70 points in the IIAC men's basketball Coaches' Poll.

Five-time defending Conference Tournament Champion, Buena Vista University, received one first-place vote, four second-place votes and is second in the Poll with 61 points, narrowly edging Simpson College, which received the remaining two first-place votes and totaled 59 points. Loras College is picked fourth in the Conference followed by defending co-Champion, Wartburg College. The complete 2006-07 IIAC men's basketball Coaches' Poll follows.

Rank	School (1st place votes)	Points	2005-06 Record
1	Coe (6)	70	20-7, 12-4 IIAC
2	Buena Vista (1)	61	15-14, 10-6 IIAC
3	Simpson (2)	59	13-14, 8-8 IIAC
4	Loras	50	17-9, 10-6 IIAC
5	Wartburg	48	19-6, 12-4 IIAC
6	Central	35	11-13, 5-11 IIAC
7	Dubuque	29	14-10, 6-10 IIAC
8	Luther	26	13-13, 7-9 IIAC
9	Cornell	18	3-22, 2-14 IIAC

Preseason Polls: Coe is ranked 17th in the DIII News preseason poll. The Kohawks and Buena Vista are both listed among those receiving votes in the d3hoops.com preseason poll.

New Coaches: **Mark Franzen**, a Wartburg College alumnus and former assistant at his alma mater, is the new head coach at Luther, succeeding **Jeff Olinger**. Franzen joins the Norse following two years as head coach at Nebraska Wesleyan University where he posted 23-29 overall record.

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

Buena Vista returns three starters and eight letterwinners from last season's 15-14 team that finished tied for third in the Conference with a 10-6 record and won the IIAC Tournament for the sixth time in seven years. The Beavers return **Brian Fogleman**, the team's starting center and leading scoring as well as two of three backcourt starters from their three guard line-up, **Rahn Franklin** and **Andre Wagner**. Fogelman was the team's leading scorer and ranked among the Conference leaders in scoring (20th, 10.5 points/game), rebounding (5th, 6.0 rebounds/game) and field goal percentage (4th, 55.5 percent). Wagner averaged 10.4 points per game, second on the team and 21st in the Conference. He also tied for 11th with 1.21 steals per game and was 12th with 1.72 3-point field goals per game. Franklin averaged 2.21 assists per game, 15th in the IIAC, to go along with a 7.6 point per game scoring average.

Buena Vista head coach **Brian Van Haaften** says, "The league continues to get stronger every year, and I believe that 4 or 5 teams have a chance to win the league."

Central returns three starters and 11 letterwinners from last season's 11-13 team that finished eighth in the Conference with a 5-11 record. Six-foot 10-inch center **Clint Driftmier**, a First Team All-Conference and All-Region selection last year, was the only Conference player to average a double-double for the season. He finished third in the IIAC with a 17.8 point per game scoring average and led the Conference with a 10.1 rebound per game average. He also ranked in the top-five in field goal percentage (3rd, 58.9 percent) and blocked shots (4th, 1.08 blocks/game). Junior guards **Brett DeHoogh** and **Zac Clark** finished one-two in the Conference in assists per game. DeHoogh averaged 5.88 assists per game with a school-record 141 assists while Clark averaged 4.50 assists per game. Clark was second in team scoring, and eighth in the Conference, with a 14.5 point per game average, was second in free throw percentage (83.8 percent) and 3-point field goals made per game (2.33), and third in steals per game (2.13). DeHoogh was Central's third leading rebounder, 4.3 per game, which was 19th in the IIAC to go along with an 8.1 point per game scoring average.

Central head coach **Mike Boschee** says, "Each year the Iowa Conference gets better and better, and this year will be no exception. We are looking forward to the challenges of the Conference race and anticipate another exciting finish."

Coe returns three starters and nine letterwinners from last season's 20-7 team that tied for its first-ever Conference basketball title with a 12-4 record. Conference Most Valuable Player **Mike Kilburg** and First Team All-Conference performer **Kyle Kuenstling** will lead the Kohawks in defense of their first Conference title. Kilburg, a center, ranked in the Conference's top-10 of scoring (3rd, 17.8 points/game), rebounding (9th, 5.6 rebounds/game), field goal percentage (2nd, 59.2 percent) and blocked shots (10th, 0.59/game). Kuenstling was the only player to rank in the Conference's top-11 in scoring, rebounding, assists and blocks. He averaged 14.1 points per game (11th in IIAC), 6.9 rebounds per game (2nd in IIAC), 3.81 assists per game (6th in IIAC) and 1.11 blocks per game (3rd in IIAC).

Coe head coach **Pat Juckem** says, "It is exciting to have a group of committed, returning players with a year in our system under their belt. That being said, the league will surely be balanced with an impressive group of returning players sprinkled throughout."

Cornell returns two starters and nine letterwinners from last season's 3-22 team that finished ninth in the Conference with a 2-14 record. A trio of sophomore perimeter players will lead the young Rams team that has a 16-man roster entirely of freshmen and sophomores. Guards **Griffin LaDew** and **Michael Tierney**, and forward **Tyler Cody** all finished in the top-30 in Conference scoring as freshmen. LaDew was the team's top scorer and 13th in the Conference, with a 13.0 point per game average. He shot 37.7 percent on 3-pointers, 14th in the IIAC, and made 1.60 3-pointers per game, 15th in the IIAC. He shot 90.6 percent from the free throw line but fell two made free throws shy of qualifying for the Conference leaders where he would have been at the top. Point guard Tierney finished third in team scoring and 25th in the Conference with a 9.6 points per game average. He also ranked seventh in the IIAC with 3.08 assists per game and led the team with a 3.4 rebound per game average. Cody was fourth in team scoring and 27th in the Conference with a 9.1 point per game average. He finished 15th in the Conference with a 36.7 percent 3-point field goal percentage and 11th with a 1.91 3-point field goal made per game average.

Cornell head coach **Mike DeGeorge** says, "We are young and extremely motivated to prove ourselves. We are excited to face the challenges ahead of us and we recognize the importance of improving at a greater rate than our competition as many of the teams on our schedule will be improved from a year ago. The key to our season will be sustained effort, focus on our system and everyone embracing their roles."

Dubuque returns two starters and four letterwinners from last season's 14-10 team that finished seventh in the Conference with a 6-10 record. Two-time All-Conference forward **Nick Thomas** and 2006 Second Team All-Conference guard **Tyler Daugherty** lead a Spartan team that has increased its win total each of the previous five years. Thomas led the Conference in scoring each of the last two seasons including a 20.0 point per game average last year. He also led the Conference in steals per game with a 2.55 average. Thomas also finished in the top-10 in free throw percentage (6th, 81.5 percent) and 3-point field goals made (9th, 2.00 per game). Daugherty is one of only two Conference players to rank in the top-11 in scoring, rebounding and assists last year. He finished 6th in scoring (15.6 points/game), 11th in rebounding (5.3 rebounds/game) and 10th in assists (3.08 assists/game). He was also fifth in the Conference in free throw percentage (82.4 percent), fourth in 3-point field goals per game (2.29 made/game) and eighth in 3-point field goal percentage (39.0 percent).

Dubuque head coach **Marty McDermott** says, "I am really excited about this group. We hope to continue to improve as a program and feel we are ready to take the next step in our rebuilding process."

Loras returns three starters and six letterwinners from last season's 17-9 team that finished tied for third in the Conference with a 10-6 record. The Duhawks have won 10 or more Conference games in five of the last six seasons, a feat only bettered by Buena Vista and Wartburg who have reached double-digit Conference wins in at least six straight years. Forwards **Kyle White** and **Luke Slater** were Loras' top-two scorers and rebounders last season. White averaged 14.3 points and 6.1 rebounds per game, which ranked 10th and fourth in the Conference, respectively. He was also among the Conference leaders in field goal percentage (6th, 52.6 percent) and free throw percentage (14th, 73.9 percent). Slater averaged 11.8 points and 5.7 rebounds per game, which ranked 16th and seventh in the Conference. He was also in the IIAC's top-15 in field goal percentage (14th, 46.8 percent), steals per game (t-14th, 1.15), 3-point field goal percentage (10th, 38.0 percent) and blocked shots (5th, 0.71/game).

Loras head coach **Chad Walthall** says, "We will have an extremely young team with just one senior and two juniors but have a number of sophomores that we feel are ready for the challenge of an always very competitive Iowa Conference."

Luther returns two starters and 10 letterwinners from last season's 13-13 team that finished sixth in the Conference with a 7-9 record. The Norse made a five game improvement from 2004-05 to 2005-06 and look to make a bigger jump under a new coach but will have to do so following the graduation of two multi-time All-Conference performers. Front court swingman **Tony Brantner**, forward **Drew Devine** and guard **Josh Johnson** will be looked to as replacements for Andy Rump and Jake Lappe, the teams top two scorers from a year ago. Devine averaged 8.3 points, 3.5 rebounds and 1.23 blocks per game as the team's sixth-man. He ranked 2nd in blocked shots and 11th in free throw percentage (76.3 percent). Johnson averaged 6.0 points, 1.8 assists and 1.15 steals per game. He tied for 14th in the Conference in steals per game and ranked 15th in free throw percentage (73.6 percent). Brantner missed a majority of last season due to injury but contributed 8.3 points and 5.5 rebounds in six games.

Luther head coach **Mark Franzen** says, "Our guys are doing a good job adjusting to a new coaching staff here at Luther. While we did lose three of our top-4 scorers from 05-06, our returners are ready to step up and fill those roles. We are looking forward to competing in a tough Iowa Conference this season."

Simpson returns four starters and 10 letterwinners from last season's 13-14 team that finished fifth in the Conference with an 8-8 record. Seniors **Jason Soppe**, **Ryan Hittenmiller** and **Jason Parkinson** lead a veteran Storm team. The trio finished one, two and three in team scoring led by Hittenmiller's 17.9 points per game (2nd in the IIAC). Soppe, limited to 15 games due to injury, averaged 16.0 points per game, and Parkinson was third in team scoring with 12.3 points per game (14th in IIAC). Hittenmiller added 5.3 rebounds per game (12th in IIAC), 1.59 steals per game (7th in IIAC) and 2.15 3-pointers per game (8th in IIAC). Soppe averaged 9.1 rebounds per game and 1.8 blocks per game. Parkinson finished third on the team with 44 assists.

Simpson head coach **Bruce Wilson** says, "Simpson has a strong senior class led by center Jason Soppe, forward Ryan Hittenmiller, and guard Jason Parkinson. I believe that our team results will be reflected in the play of these three individuals. Our team performed well at the end of last year despite Soppe not playing because of his broken foot. If we can remain healthy I think that we can be in the hunt with the top teams in the Conference in February."

Wartburg returns two starters and 11 letterwinners from last season's 19-6 team that tied for its IIAC-record 21st Conference title with a 12-4 record. The Knights must overcome the graduation of three All-Conference performers including two 1,000-point scorers and another that fell just shy of the milestone. Forward **Nick Gullickson**, forward/guard **Lee Nelson** and forward/center **Danny Stark** will lead Wartburg in its quest for a third straight Conference title. Nelson is the team's top returning scorer, averaging 8.2 points per game last year, fourth on the team and just outside the Conference's top-30. He was also second on the team with 45 assists while shooting 44.4 percent from the field including 37.8 percent on 3-pointers (12th in the IIAC). Gullickson was second on the team in rebounding (4.7 rebounds/game), steals (22) and blocked shots (16) while averaging 6.2 points per game off the bench. Stark started 20 of 25 games as a freshman last year, contributing 4.1 points, 3.2 rebounds and 1.1 assists per game.

Wartburg head coach **Dick Peth** says, "This year's team will need to overcome lack of size and experience, and a variety of early season injuries, to compete in the 'ever so strong' Iowa Conference. The quality of the League is stronger than ever."

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