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IOWA CONFERENCE WOMEN'S TENNIS CHAMPIONSHIP PREVIEW

CEDAR RAPIDS, IOWA . . . The 2006 Iowa Intercollegiate Athletic Conference (IIAC) women's tennis Championship begins this weekend, October 13-14, with the Individual Tournament at Veterans Memorial Park in Cedar Rapids. All nine Conference schools will participate in the Individual Tournament and the top-four teams from this weekend will compete in the Team Tournament on October 21, also in Cedar Rapids. This marks the third year an Individual and Team Tournament will be used to determine the IIAC Champion.

Friday's play is scheduled to begin with singles matches at 8:30 a.m. followed by doubles. Brackets will be played through the semifinal round. Play on Saturday is scheduled to begin with the fifth- and seventh-place singles matches at 9:00 a.m. followed by the third-place and Championship singles matches and then all doubles place matches. Weather could force changes to the schedule. Any changes will be posted on the Iowa Conference web site at www.iowaconference.com.

The Individual Tournament will feature six singles flights and three doubles flights. Players will be seeded and compete in a bracket to determine places 1-9. A player finishing first in her flight will earn her team nine points, a second-place finish is worth eight points...a ninth-place finish is worth one point. The four teams earning the most points in the Individual Tournament will compete in the Team Tournament. Exact times and locations for the Team Tournament will be determined following the Individual Tournament.

The top-four in the final tennis standings will be based on the finish of the Team Tournament. Standings for teams five through nine, as well as All-Conference honors, will be determined by the finish of the Individual Tournament.

AQ On the Line: The NCAA has expanded the field size for the women's tennis National Championship and this year will award automatic bids to qualifying Conferences. The Iowa Conference women's tennis Champion will be the Conference's automatic qualifier to the 2007 NCAA women's tennis Championship scheduled to begin at regional sites on May 4, 2007. The national finals are May 15-20 at the University of Mary Washington in Fredericksburg, Va.

2005 Recap: Luther and Coe swept the nine individual titles, with Luther winning six titles and Coe winning three en route to earning the top two seeds for the Team Tournament with 76 and 67 points, respectively. In addition to six individual Champions, the Norse had one runner-up and two third-place finishes. Coe had two runner-up finishes, a third-place finish, two fourth-place finishes and a fifth-place finish. The Norse and Kohawks met in the Team Tournament Championship match with Luther winning, 5-3, to earn its 23rd IIAC title in 24 years.

Cornell (62 points) and Central (57 points) finished third and fourth in the Individual Tournament and met in the third-place match of the Team Tournament with Cornell coming away with a 5-4 victory. Cornell had four second-place finishes in the Individual Tournament, two third-place finishes, two fourth-place finishes and a sixth-place finish. Central had a second-place finish, three third-place finishes, three fourth-place finishes and two fifth-place finishes.

Top Returning Individuals: Fifteen singles players and 15 doubles players that finished in the top-four of their flight at last year's Conference Championship return this year. Defending #1 singles Champion **Molly Fiala** of Coe won the ITA Midwest Regional Tournament two weeks ago to qualify for the ITA Nationals in Florida being held this week and will not participate in this year's Individual Tournament.

Central's **Kristin Kovar** is the lone returning top-four finisher at #1 singles, finishing fourth in 2005. Luther's **Annalise Conaway** and Cornell's **Pavla Brachova** finished second and third, respectively at #2 singles last year and will play at #1 this year. Central's **Hilary Baehr** finished fourth at #2 singles and is joined at that position by last year's first and second-place finishers at #3 singles, Luther's **Molly Beyer** and Cornell's **Emily Loewen**.

At #3 singles, last year's third-place finisher, **Katie Mokelstad** of Central is joined by Luther's **Taylor Cochrane** who won the #6 singles title, Coe's **Lindsey Driscoll** and Cornell's **Jess Horn** who finished second at #4 and #5 singles, respectively, and Loras' **Colette Flo** who finished fourth at #6.

Last year's third and fourth-place finishers at #4 singles, Cornell's **Jenna Morris** and Simpson's **Jen Gibson**, return in the same flight. Coe's **Susan Gilmer** finished fourth at #3 singles last year and will play at #4 this year. Also moving to #4 is Central's **Whitney Visser**, the runner-up at #6 singles a year ago.

In the doubles brackets, three top-four teams return in tact from last year. Central's Kovar/**Jennifer Knobbe** finished fourth at #1 doubles, Loras' **Jen Phelan/Anita Saeger** finished second at #2 doubles and Central's Baehr/Mokelstad finished third at #2. Phelan and Saeger have moved up to the #1 position this year.

Cornell's Brachova was one-half of the runner-up team at #1 doubles last year. This year she will be paired with **Emily Loewen**, who finished fourth at #2 doubles last year with **Jess Horn**. Horn will play #2 this year with **Caryl Abeyta**. Luther's Conaway, one-half of the Champion team at #2 last year, will play #1 doubles this year with Cochrane. The Norse also had the #3 doubles Champions last year, Beyer and **Amy Christensen**. Beyer is playing at #2 this year with **Heidi Bothun** and Christensen is at #3 with **Keely Houlahan**.

Coe's **Lisa Sadewasser**, Central's **Maureen Khairallah** and Cornell's **Jenna Morris** finished second, third and fourth, respectively at #3 doubles last year. Sadewasser is playing at #2 doubles this year with **Hillary Allen**. Khairallah is teamed with **Faith Bliss** at #3 and Morris is teamed with **Becky Birkhofer** also at #3.

Previous IAC women's tennis Championship results can be found at:
<http://www.iowaconference.com/women/tennis/tournaments.htm>.

The 2006 Championship bracket will be released on the Iowa Conference web site (www.iowaconference.com) on Thursday.

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