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2007 IOWA CONFERENCE MEN'S SOCCER PREVIEW

CEDAR RAPIDS, IOWA . . . Defending league co-champion Loras College is the pick of Iowa Intercollegiate Athletic Conference (IIAC) men's soccer coaches to win the 2007 IIAC title. The Duhawks received four of nine first-place votes, totaling 68 points in the IIAC men's soccer Coaches' Poll.

Three-time defending Conference Champion, Wartburg College, garnered four first-place votes, a second-place vote, and three third-place votes, and are second in the Poll with 65 points. Central College, which is third with 62 points, picked up the final first-place vote. The complete 2007 IIAC men's soccer Coaches' Poll follows:

Rank	School (1st place votes)	Points	2006 Record
1	Loras (4)	68	13-5-2, 7-1 IIAC
2	Wartburg (4)	65	19-3-1, 7-1 IIAC
3	Central (1)	62	13-5-3, 6-1-1 IIAC
T4	Luther	47	7-13-1, 3-4-1 IIAC
T4	Simpson	47	9-10, 5-3 IIAC
6	Dubuque	35	9-8-2, 2-5-1 IIAC
7	Buena Vista	31	4-14-1, 2-5-1 IIAC
8	Cornell	21	3-13, 2-6 IIAC
9	Coe	20	0-19-1, 0-8 IIAC

New Coaches: **Scott Phipps**, former assistant women's soccer coach at Hastings (Neb.), is the new head coach at Buena Vista. He replaces Matt Klosterman who accepted the head men's coaching position at North Central (Ill.) over the summer after five seasons at the helm in Storm Lake. **Homer Screws**, head men's coach at Coe from 1992-98, returns to the Cedar Rapids school after spending the last several years coaching club soccer in Eastern Iowa. He replaces Donovan Kron who resigned after three seasons.

Conference Tournament: The season opens Friday, August 31, with five teams in action. The Iowa Conference schedule opens Thursday, September 20 with a single game – Central at Cornell. The top-six teams following the regular season round-robin schedule qualify for the 2007 Iowa Conference Tournament with an automatic bid to the NCAA Tournament on the line. The quarterfinal matches, played at the #3 and #4 seeds, will be October 30 or 31. The semifinals and finals are November 2-3, hosted by the top seed.

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

Buena Vista returns seven starters and 13 letterwinners from last season's 4-14-1 team that finished tied for sixth in the Conference with a 2-5-1 record. Senior midfielder **Jayke Vallette** returns as an offensive threat after finishing tied for second in goals (3) and third in points (7). Sophomore forward/midfielder **Cody Nicely-Green** also returns after posting one goal and one assist for three points in 2006. Senior defender **Tim Schieber** will help anchor a defense that finished fourth in the Conference in both goals allowed (1.74/game) and goals-against average (1.68).

Buena Vista head coach **Scott Phipps** says, "With a young nucleus of players combined with strong senior leadership, we have the tools to do some very good things this year. With the right work ethic and commitment level, the lads will have a chance to be successful."

Central returns nine starters and 13 letterwinners from last season's 13-5-3 team that finished third in the Conference with a 6-1-1 record. The Dutch ranked only fifth in the Conference in scoring last season (1.81 goals/game), scoring one goal or less in 10 of their 21 games, but ranked first in the IIAC and 18th in NCAA Division III in goals allowed (0.55/game). Central returns its top two scorers from 2006 and a total of five All-Conference selections. Junior midfielder **Cruz Herr** is back after being named First Team All-Conference last season. He posted one goal and one assist in 20 games. Senior midfielder **Blake Scott**, a Second Team selection in 2005, also returns after starting 18 of 21 games a year ago. Up front, senior **Cody Stoermer** and junior **Clint Schreiber**, both Second Team honorees last year, lead the way. Stoermer and Schreiber tied for the team lead with 27 points last season. Stoermer scored a team-high 10 goals and seven assists, while Schreiber posted nine goals and nine assists. Sophomore defender **Erik Lundgren** was a Second Team All-Conference selection as a freshman.

Central head coach **Garry Laidlaw** says, ""The Iowa Conference has improved very much over the last few years. Our league stature has been enhanced by how well the teams from our league have represented themselves and the IIAC in the National tournament. I think the league will be strong yet again this year, with a number of team's having a chance to compete for the title."

Coe returns nine starters and 14 letterwinners from last season's 0-19-1 team that finished ninth in the Conference with a 0-8 record. With disappointing results over the past few years, Coe looks to improve dramatically with 11 incoming freshmen and a strong core unit returning. The Kohawks return 80 percent of their goal scoring and over 85 percent of their overall scoring from last season, led by junior forward **Vance Rudolf**. Rudolf led the team with four goals, two assists and 10 points. Senior defender **Bryan Abney** tied for second on the team with one goals and two assists, while senior defender **Matt Sonntag** started 18 of 20 games. Sophomore goalkeeper **Wesley Beckwith** started 17 of 19 games in 2006 making 122 saves and posting a .626 save percentage and a 4.37 goals-against average.

Coe head coach **Homer Screws** says, "I feel confident that the incoming team will exceed expectations now and in the future."

Cornell returns seven starters and 10 letterwinners from last season's 3-13 team that finished eighth in the Conference with a 2-6 record. Cornell's experience is in the backfield. Senior defender **Cameron Gallegos**, an All-Conference pick in 2004, is the Rams' top returning scorer from 2006. In 14 games last season, Gallegos netted a team-high four goals, including a game-winner, and two assists for 10 points. Junior defender **Kyle Roberts** started 15 games last season, while fellow defender **Chris Ndjungu** posted one assist in 11 games.

Coe head coach **Dan Cotterill** says, "We're going to rely on our returning players, but I'm unsure how the team is going to gel with the amount of new players on the squad. I would call this a team building year. We'll find out who we are this season."

Dubuque returns eight starters and eight letterwinners from last season's 9-8-2 team that finished tied for sixth in the Conference with a 2-5-1 record, narrowly missing the school's first trip to the IIAC Men's Soccer Tournament. Junior forward **Nick Cookston**, a First Team All-Conference performer last season, scored 22 goals and added five assists to lead the Spartans offense. Cookston's goal total ranked second in the Conference. Senior **Josh Jones** returns in goal after starting all 17 games for Dubuque in 2005 and leading the IIAC with 7.0 saves per game. Junior outside midfielder Chad Newquist ranked third on the team in scoring with three goals and 13 points. Newquist's seven assists led the team and ranked fourth in the Iowa Conference.

Dubuque head coach **Jason Berna** says, "The UD Men's team took a big step forward in 2006 and this season is going to be even better with eight returning starters back in the line-up. We feel with the new additions, transfers and newcomers we are adding to the mix we will be ready to move up the conference ladder and push for the playoffs this season."

Loras returns eight starters and 12 letterwinners from last season's 13-5-2 team that tied for the Conference title with a 7-1 record and reached the NCAA Tournament. Three All-Conference performers return to lead the Duhawks in 2007. Junior defender **Matt Splittgerber** and sophomore midfielder **Santiago Mejia** were each First Team selections. Splittgerber led a defense that finished third in the IIAC in scoring defense at 1.00 goal per game. Mejia led the team and finished second in the Conference with 10 assists. Senior forward **Mike Richter**, a Second Team All-Conference and Second Team All-Region selection, was Loras' top offensive threat in 2006. He registered a team-high 24 points on 11 goals and two assists, ranking fourth in the Conference in goals and eighth in points. **Matt Pucci**, another senior forward, was second on the team in goals with six, including a team-high four in league play.

Loras head coach **Dan Rothert** says, "Returning a very young, but experienced team that was conference co-champions in 2006 and received a second consecutive bid to the NCAA Tournament, we are very excited about the coming soccer season at Loras. With the firepower we have returning on offense and the experience we have returning on defense, we expect to compete again for the conference title and hope to be in the mix of the NCAA tournament again. The IIAC should be very competitive with several teams not just being in the title hunt, but being some of the better teams in the region."

Luther returns 10 starters and 22 letterwinners from last season's 7-13-1 team that finished fifth in the Conference with a 3-4-1 record. The defense will be strong for the Norse led by a pair of seniors – goalkeeper **Ben Parman** and First Team All-Conference defender **John Schroeder**. Parman started 13 matches last year, posting a 6-5-1 record with a 1.10 goals against average, an .835 save percentage and five shutouts. He was fourth in the IIAC in save percentage and fifth in GAA, shutouts, and saves (76). Schroeder posted one assist in 20 games last season. Sophomore midfielder **Adam Pyzdrowski** led the team in scoring last season with seven goals and 15 points, but will return to an outside defending position this season. Junior midfielder **David Keller** was the team's second-leading scorer in 2006 with four goals and a team-high three assists for 11 points. Sophomore forward **Luis Enriquez** was third on the team in scoring with three goals and six points.

Luther head coach **Doug Mello** says, "After a disappointing '06 campaign, our new and improved squad should be back in their usual front runner spot for '07. The scoring drought which hampered the team's success has been addressed with the addition of a talented group of goal scorers. Watch out for the "Norse Return to Form" tour in '07!"

Simpson returns five starters and 12 letterwinners from last season's 9-10-0 team that finished fourth in the Conference with a 5-3-0 record. With only one senior on the squad, the Storm will be led by sophomores **Corey Miller** and **Connor Skultety**. Miller, a Second Team All-Conference selection at midfielder as a freshman, broke the Simpson record for assists in a season with a league-high 11 helpers. He finished the year third on the team in points (19) and fifth in goals (4). Skultety started 18 games at defensive midfielder, scoring one goal while anchoring the defense. Sophomores **Josh Youngman** and **Jeremy Ward** split time in goal for Simpson last season. Youngman posted a 6-7 record with a .767 save percentage and a 1.64 goals-against average in just over 1100 minutes. Youngman's 66 saves ranked fifth in the IIAC. Ward played in nine games in goal, starting five, posting a 3-2 record with a .750 save percentage, a 1.27 GAA, and 21 saves.

Simpson head coach **Mike Wilson** says, "With a young team, we will gain valuable experience as we start the season against some of the top teams in our region. We look forward to the challenges of conference play."

Wartburg returns six starters and 17 letterwinners from last season's 19-3-1 team that finished tied for first in the Conference with a 7-1 record and reached its third straight "Sweet 16". The Knights led the Iowa Conference in every offensive team category last season and return four All-IIAC selections who will help drive the team toward a fourth consecutive league crown. Senior forward **Luke McClyman**, a First Team All-Conference honoree and Third Team d3kicks.com All-American, posted 16 goals, seven assists, and 39 points as the team's second-leading scorer last fall. He joins senior midfielders **Joe Hoeksema** and **Casey Johnson**, both Second Team All-IIAC selections a year ago, as the team's leaders this season. Hoeksema tallied two goals, five assists and nine points in 2006, while Johnson scored three goals, four assists, and 10 points. Junior defender **Robert Acosta** will anchor the Wartburg defense after posting three assists in 20 games last fall. Junior goalkeeper **Matt Shepard**, a Second Team All-Conference selection, leads a netminding corps that posted a league-high 13 shutouts and finished second in goals allowed (14) and goals-against average (0.60).

Wartburg head coach **Jim Conlon** says, "The parity in the IIAC has increased in the last few years for both the men and the women. It is going to be a dogfight by many teams to win the 2007 title."