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## 2010 IOWA CONFERENCE BASEBALL PREVIEW

**CEDAR RAPIDS, IOWA . . .** Coe College, which placed third in the Iowa Intercollegiate Athletic Conference (IIAC) baseball race last season, is the coaches' pick to capture the 2010 Iowa Conference crown. The Kohawks amassed 68 points and four first-place votes to edge Buena Vista University (66 points; 4 first-place votes) for the top spot.

Wartburg College, the 2009 IIAC Tournament champion which saw its string of 12 consecutive Iowa Conference titles snapped last season, received the remaining first-place vote and is third in the Poll with 59 points, followed by defending league co-champions Loras College and Luther College in fourth and fifth place with 49 points and 43 points, respectively. The complete 2010 IIAC baseball Coaches' Poll follows.

Rank	School (1st place votes)	Points	2009 Record
1	Coe (4)	68	(25-19, 14-8 IIAC)
2	Buena Vista (4)	66	(27-14, 13-10 IIAC)
3	Wartburg (1)	59	(28-20, 14-10 IIAC)
4	Loras	49	(25-14, 15-7 IIAC)
5	Luther	43	(29-13, 15-7 IIAC)
6	Central	39	(17-20, 10-12 IIAC)
7	Simpson	33	(19-23, 11-13 IIAC)
8	Cornell	20	(10-23, 7-14 IIAC)
9	Dubuque	19	(8-31, 2-20 IIAC)

**Conference Schedule:** The 2010 Iowa Conference baseball schedule gets underway Friday, March 26, as eight of nine schools – Buena Vista has the opening bye – take to the diamond to open their 24-game league slates. Schools will play a 3-game series against each Conference opponent. Two of those series will be weekday series with a 7-inning doubleheader on a Tuesday and a single 9-inning game on a Wednesday in consecutive weeks. The remaining series will be played on Friday-Saturday at the same site. A single 9-inning game will be played on Friday followed by a 7-inning doubleheader on Saturday.

**Conference Tournament:** The 2010 Iowa Conference Baseball Tournament hosted by Coe College will be held May 13-15 in Cedar Rapids. The top two teams from the regular season will receive a first round bye and the Tournament schedule will feature four games each on Thursday and Friday and two, possibly three, games on Saturday. Excluding one first round game at Daniels Park, all games are scheduled to be played on Perfect Game Field at Veterans Memorial Stadium, home of the Los Angeles Angels of Anaheim's Midwest League affiliate Cedar Rapids Kernels.

**New Face in the Dugout:** The only new head coach in the league this year is at Cornell where **Adam Hadenfeldt** takes over for **Frank Fishler**. Hadenfeldt, a 2006 Cornell graduate, was a three-year starter in the outfield for the Rams who was a part of three Iowa Conference tournament teams, including the 2003 squad that won a school-record 27 games and finished second in the IIAC after entering the tournament as the top seed.

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

## Buena Vista University

**2009 Record:** 27-14 overall, 13-10 IIAC (fifth; 0-2 in IIAC Tournament)

The Beavers return all four All-Conference players plus an honorable mention selection from 2009. Leading BVU into the 2010 season is senior outfielder **Brandon Pietrzyk**, a D3baseball.com and ABCA Second Team All-American last year. Pietrzyk hit .423 with 29 RBI, eight doubles, two triples, and four home runs. He ranked second in the league in hits (43) and RBI, ranked third in the IIAC in batting average and slugging percentage (.736), fourth in on-base percentage (.515), and stole a league-high 13 bases. He was also 3-1 on the mound in league play with a 5.53 ERA and 16 strikeouts in six appearances and committed only one error in 46 chances in the field.

Junior catcher **Kevin Kloewer** and junior relief pitcher **Kyle Duplic** also made the First Team last season. Kloewer hit .358 with 29 hits, 25 RBI, a .667 slugging percentage, seven doubles, and a league-high six home runs in IIAC play, ranking fourth in slugging and fifth in RBI. Defensively, he ranked second in the league with a .990 fielding percentage after making only error in 105 chances. Duplic, also a 2008 Second Team All-IIAC pick, appeared in nine IIAC games, posting a 5-1 record with 10 strikeouts and a 6.32 ERA in 15 2/3 innings. He ranked second in wins and finished a league-high eight games.

Junior shortstop **Brad Blum**, a Second Team All-Conference last season, hit .337 in league play, primarily from the leadoff position. He finished the IIAC season with 29 hits, 22 runs scored, and nine stolen bases, while posting a league-leading 86 assists, defensively and figuring into 13 double plays. 2009 honorable mention pick **Michael Hoffman**, a junior outfielder, started all 22 of BVU's league games, hitting .274 with 23 hits, 8 doubles, 20 runs scored, and 20 RBI. Hoffman ranked sixth in the league in doubles. Junior starting pitcher **Luke Probasco** appeared in six games last season, making three starts and posting a 3-2 record with 16 strikeouts, a 6.18 ERA and a complete game in 27 2/3 innings.

### Quote from head coach Steve Eddie

"Everyone in our program knows we need to get better in all areas of the game. We faltered at the end last year because we weren't as sound as the other teams in the league. With a lot of veteran guys in the program, they understand what it is going to take to improve our conference record."

## Central College

**2009 Record:** 17-20 overall, 10-12 IIAC (seventh; DNQ for IIAC Tournament)

Central will be looking to make a return trip to the Iowa Conference tournament after seeing a run of five straight appearances come to an end by mere percentage points a year ago. The Dutch return four of five All-Iowa Conference players from a year ago, led by first teamers **Mike Furlong** and **Caleb Rangel**. Furlong, a sophomore second baseman, had a break-out freshman season in 2009, hitting a team-high .376 in 22 conference games with 32 hits, four doubles, three triples, three home runs, and 25 runs scored. He ranked tied for the league lead in triples, ranked fourth in runs scored, eighth in hits, 10<sup>th</sup> in slugging percentage (.600), 11<sup>th</sup> in on-base percentage (.454), and 12<sup>th</sup> in batting average. Defensively, he ranked fourth in doubles plays fielded with 15 and ninth in assists with 52. Rangel, a junior outfielder, hit .338 with seven doubles, two home runs and 24 RBI. He ranked seventh in RBI, ninth in doubles, and 15<sup>th</sup> in on-base percentage (.442).

Junior rightfielder **Jarred Lackey** and sophomore right-handed pitcher **Corey Eisenmann** also return after earning All-IIAC Second Team honors in 2009. Lackey, who also garnered Third Team All-Region plaudits, hit .337 with seven doubles, two home runs, nine stolen bases, and 22 RBI in 22 league starts. Defensively, he posted a .984 fielding percentage, finishing 14<sup>th</sup> in the IIAC after making just one error in 64 chances. Eisenmann made seven starts, posting a 4-1 record with 23 strikeouts, a 5.14 ERA, and one complete game in 42 innings.

### Quote from head coach Adam Stevens

"We return a lot from last year and have some talented newcomers as well. Our guys have been working hard and we look forward to the Iowa Conference season"

## Coe College

**2009 Record:** 25-19 overall, 14-8 IIAC (third; 3-2, third in IIAC Tournament)

Coe scored a league-high six All-Conference honors last season and return four plus an honorable mention selection to the fold in 2010. Senior first baseman **Pat Richmond**, a First Team all-league pick, was the Iowa Conference's leading hitter last season, batting .512 with 11 doubles and three home runs. He also posted a league-high .774 slugging percentage and a .543 on-base percentage. Defensively, he posted a .982 fielding percentage (4 errors in 224 chances). The Kohawks' other 2009 First Team All-IIAC pick, senior starting pitcher **Cody Raisch** posted a 6-0 record in a 51.0 innings with 36 strikeouts and a league-low 2.82 earned-run average in seven league appearances last year. Opponents hit .227 off him in 2009. Raisch, who threw four complete games in league play, was also a Second Team All-Region pick in 2009.

Senior third baseman/outfielder **Ryan Schisler** and sophomore outfielder **Adam Nisenson** each earned Second Team All-Conference honors a year ago. Schisler started all 22 of Coe's league games, hitting .363 with seven doubles and three home runs, ranking ninth in the IIAC in doubles, 12<sup>th</sup> in runs batted in (22), and 15<sup>th</sup> in slugging percentage (.563). Nisenson hit .392 with 29 hits in 74 at-bats and had a .444 on-base percentage, ranking 10<sup>th</sup> among IIAC hitters in the former category and 13<sup>th</sup> in the latter.

Junior **Ryan Velvick**, a 2008 First Team All-IIAC selection and a 2009 Third Team All-Region pick, returns as the Kohawks' everyday shortstop after being selected honorable mention as a utility player last season. Velvick hit .322 with a .586 slugging percentage (11<sup>th</sup> in the IIAC), 24 RBI (t-7<sup>th</sup>), four home runs (t-5<sup>th</sup>), and a league-high three triples.

### Quote from head coach Steve Cook

"I think this will be one of the toughest years to compete in the Iowa Conference and qualify in the top six for the tournament. We're looking forward to the challenges that lie ahead and are working to be prepared for the tight ballgames week in and week out. If you can find a way to win the close ones more often, you give yourself a chance at the end. We will need our upperclassmen to step up and lead our effort."

## Cornell College

**2009 Record:** 10-23 overall, 7-14 IIAC (eighth; DNQ for IIAC Tournament)

Cornell enters the 2010 season looking to make a move in the Iowa Conference standings and qualify for the IIAC Tournament for the first time since 2004, the longest drought for any current league school. In order to do so, the Rams must fill roles previously held by two-time First Team All-Conference utility player **Casey Korn**, who made 12 appearances on the mound and hit over .300 last season while playing every infield position except second base and catcher.

Senior second baseman **Matt Shimanovsky** played in 20 IIAC games a year ago, leading the Rams with a .397 batting average, 27 hits, nine doubles, and 15 RBI. He ranked third in the league in doubles, eighth in batting average, 10<sup>th</sup> in on-base percentage (.455), and 13<sup>th</sup> in slugging percentage (.574). Junior outfielder **Matt Pfister** hit .333 in 18 league games, posting 18 hits and three doubles, while junior third baseman **Andrew Patzke** hit .324 with 22 hits and 24 RBI. He ranked seventh in the IIAC in RBI. In all games, Pfister led the team with a .377 batting average, just ahead of Patzke (.374).

Junior first baseman **Ryan Clausen** worked his way into the Rams' starting lineup as the Conference season got underway last season and made the most of his chances, hitting .396 with eight doubles and two home runs. He ranked fifth in slugging percentage (.660), sixth in doubles, and ninth in batting average and on-base percentage (.458). Defensively, he made only one error in 120 chances for a .992 fielding percentage, ranking ninth in the IIAC. On the mound, junior righty **Adam Butler** posted a 2-4 record with a 10.32 ERA and 17 strikeouts in seven appearances.

### Quote from head coach Adam Hadenfeldt

"We are excited to get the 2010 season underway. We have a strong group of upperclassmen that have provided great leadership throughout the year and early part of practice; as well as helping to instill a hard working, competitive attitude. We know that we need to improve throughout the year to achieve our goals, and the guys are really buying in to what we are preaching as coaches. We will be looking to mix a good group of underclassmen in with our returning players and we hope to be competing for a spot in the Conference Tournament this Spring."

## University of Dubuque

**2009 Record:** 8-31 overall, 2-20 IIAC (9<sup>th</sup>; DNQ for IIAC Tournament)

Dubuque will use a mix of youth and experience as it attempts to qualify for the Iowa Conference tournament for the first time since 2005 and for just the third time since qualification was limited to the top six schools in the standings in 1998.

Senior catcher **Alex Larson** played in 21 IIAC games, hitting .275 with four doubles and two home runs. Senior second baseman/pitcher **Orlando Mejia** appeared in 14 conference games in 2009, hitting .344 with 11 hits, four RBI and seven runs scored.

Sophomore right-hander **Mark Hennessy** leads the Spartan pitching corps after posting a 1-4 record with a 3.83 ERA, four complete games, and 25 strikeouts in seven appearances a year ago. Hennessy ranked fifth in ERA, ninth in opposing batting average (.289), 11<sup>th</sup> in strikeouts, and 13<sup>th</sup> in innings pitched (40.0).

### Quote from head coach Shane Schellsmidt

"We will be a very young team, but I firmly believe that we can surprise people along the way earning a spot in the Conference Tournament."

## Loras College

**2009 Record:** 25-14 overall, 15-7 IIAC (tie, first; 0-2 in IIAC Tournament)

Defending conference co-champion Loras will need to fill holes left by the graduation of 2009 IIAC Position Player of the Year **Nick Olberding**, First Teamer **Adam Gross**, and Second Teamer **Clark Egdorf**, but 2009 IIAC Coach of the Year **Carl Tebon** will have plenty of experience to rely on in the interim as four other All-Conference picks plus an honorable mention selection are back to take on most of the load as the Duhawks pursue their second consecutive title and just a third overall.

Senior third baseman **Ben Kuebel** joined Gross on the All-IIAC First Team in 2009. Kuebel hit .375 with four doubles, two home runs, and 27 runs scored a year ago, ranking second in runs scored 12<sup>th</sup> in on-base percentage (.451), 13<sup>th</sup> in batting average and hits (30). He also stole seven bases to rank seventh in the IIAC. Junior outfielder **Austin Brown** landed on the All-IIAC Second Team after hitting .349 with 30 hits, six doubles and 24 RBI in 2009. He ranked seventh in RBI, 10<sup>th</sup> in stolen bases (6) and 13<sup>th</sup> in hits. Senior catcher **John Schroeder**, an honorable mention pick, hit .314 in league play with 22 hits, five doubles, and 16 RBI, while drawing 14 walks.

On the mound, sophomore **Austin Safranski** and junior **Kyler Laurie** combined to go 11-0 with 40 strikeouts in 72 innings during league play last season. Safranski, a First Team All-IIAC pick, went 5-0 with 19 strikeouts, a 5.53 ERA and one complete game in eight appearances, while Laurie, a Second Teamer, went 6-0 with 21 strikeouts, a 4.88 ERA and one complete game in nine appearances.

Laurie shared the league lead in pitching wins while ranking fourth in opposing batting average (.266) and 12<sup>th</sup> in ERA. Safranski ranked third in wins and 12<sup>th</sup> in innings pitched (40.2).

### Quote from head coach Carl Tebon

"The IIAC, again, will be a challenge for everyone from top to bottom. We have every starter back on the mound this year, so we need to make plays behind those guys to be able to stay on top of the IIAC. We have added a lot new talent this year, but it will be hard to replace the experience we lost last year."

## Luther College

**2009 Record:** 29-13 overall, 15-7 IIAC (tie, first; 2-2, runner-up at IIAC Tournament)

Luther lost three of five All-Conference players from 2009, including a pair of starting pitchers, but the Norse will not be deterred from their pursuit of a third title in four years and back-to-back titles for the first time since winning three in a row from 1983 to 1985.

Senior pitcher **Cody Hyland** and sophomore second baseman/outfielder **Chris Reynolds** were each named Second Team All-Iowa Conference last season. Hyland appeared in seven IIAC games last season, compiling a 4-0 mark with 28 strikeouts, a 4.19 ERA and two complete games. He ranked sixth in opposing batting average (.276), seventh in wins, ninth in ERA, 10<sup>th</sup> in strikeouts, and 14<sup>th</sup> in innings pitched (38.2). Reynolds ranked fifth in the league with a .418 batting average. He posted 33 hits in 79 at-bats with five doubles, one home run, and 26 RBI in 22 games. In addition, Reynolds ranked fourth in RBI, seventh in hits, and 14<sup>th</sup> in on-base percentage (.443).

Senior catcher/designated hitter **Zack Topping** was a 2009 honorable mention selection, hitting .397 with 29 hits, five doubles, and 17 RBI. He ranked seventh league-wide in batting average. Senior first baseman **Ben Schott** looks to rebound from a junior year where he hit just .194 with two doubles, one triple, one home run, and 11 RBI, while senior pitcher/second baseman **Jeff Riddle** should play more of a factor in 2010 after going 1-1 with a 3.38 ERA, one save, and six strikeouts in 10 2/3 innings last year.

### Quote from head coach Brian Gillogly

"Our strengths will be offensive production with good team speed. We have the potential to develop into a quality pitching staff and play consistent fundamental defense. If this proves to be true, we feel we can once again be very competitive in the Iowa Conference race."

## Simpson College

**2009 Record:** 19-23 overall, 11-13 IIAC (sixth; 0-2 in IIAC tournament)

Senior centerfielder **Corey Rasmussen** is Simpson's lone returning All-Conference player. Rasmussen, a Second Team utility player, was the Storm's third-leading hitter in conference play with a .352 average. He knocked out 31 hits with six doubles, 10 RBI, and 22 runs scored, ranking eighth in runs and 11<sup>th</sup> in hits. Rasmussen also stole a league-high 13 bases.

Senior third baseman **Scott Ethell** hit .349 with 29 hits, seven doubles, and three home runs in 24 games, while junior shortstop **Dave Johnson** hit .258 with 24 hits, six doubles, three home runs and 19 runs scored.

Senior right-handed pitcher **Kyle Hanna** ranked sixth in the league with a 4.02 earned-run average. In 10 appearances, he compiled a 2-1 record with 21 strikeouts and one complete game. IIAC batters hit a league-low .214 against him. Fellow senior **Clint Rhodes**, another righty, ranked seventh with a 4.11 ERA. Rhodes also posted a 2-1 record, but struck out 25 and threw two complete games in just eight appearances.

### Quote from head coach Ben Blake

"This year will be a rebuilding year for us, as we return three starters from last year. However, we will field an all-around athletic team that should be competitive."

## Wartburg College

**2009 Record:** 28-20 overall, 14-10 IIAC (fourth; 5-1, won IIAC Tournament)

Despite not winning the Iowa Conference title for the first time in 12 years, Wartburg still managed to come out on top in the end, fighting its way through the consolation side of the Iowa Conference tournament to win three consecutive games on the tourney's final day to capture the tournament crown and associated NCAA berth.

Gone from that team are all-everything player **Jerrold Martijn**, the 2008 IIAC Position Player and 2009 IIAC Pitcher of the Year, and First Team All-Conference first baseman **Mike Johnson**, but head coach Joel Holst returns a pair of All-Conference players and three honorable mention selections, two of whom were All-IIAC picks in 2008.

Junior outfielder **Patrick Grau**, a First Team All-IIAC selection, trailed only Johnson in hitting on the team, posting a .415 batting average with 34 hits, five doubles, three triples, two home runs, 24 RBI, and 22 runs scored in 24 games. He led the league in triples and ranked fifth in on-base percentage (.490), fifth in hits, sixth in batting average, seventh in slugging percentage (.622), seventh in RBI, and eighth in runs scored. Grau was also named Second Team All-Region for his efforts.

Junior starting pitcher **Brad Watson**, a Second Team All-Conference pick, posted a 4-3 record, a 2.96 ERA, 36 strikeouts, and three complete games in seven IIAC appearances last season. He ranked second in ERA, fourth in strikeouts, seventh in wins and innings pitched (45.2), and 10<sup>th</sup> in opposing batting average (.292).

Honorable mention selection **Billy Schmitt**, a senior who was a First Team All-IIAC pick in 2008, posted a 4-3 mark on the mound with a 4.58 ERA, 32 strikeouts and one complete game in seven appearances. He also hit .288 in 59 at-bats. Schmitt ranked eighth in strikeouts, 11<sup>th</sup> in ERA, 15<sup>th</sup> in opposing batting average (.304) and innings pitched (37.1).

Senior shortstop **Danny Rose** and junior relief pitcher **Nate Rost** were also honorable mention picks. Rose, also a Second Teamer in 2008, hit .341 with 31 hits, four doubles and 20 runs scored for the Knights, ranking 11<sup>th</sup> in hits. Defensively, he ranked second in assists with 82. Rost made nine pitching appearances, compiling an 0-1 record with 20 strikeouts and three saves in 15.2 innings. He led the IIAC in saves and games finished (8).

### Quote from head coach Joel Holst

"I am excited about this group of guys. Our core group of starters were our best performers last year and the top end of our pitching staff is as experienced and talented as we have had. Overall, we are as young as we have ever been – 24 freshmen – and we will need to rely on a few of these young kids to fill roles."