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## 2010 IOWA CONFERENCE SOFTBALL PREVIEW

**CEDAR RAPIDS, IOWA . . .** Defending NCAA Division III runner-up Coe College and 2009 NCAA qualifier Luther College are the coaches' co-favorites to win the 2010 Iowa Conference softball crown. The Kohawks led the way with five first-place votes, while the Norse picked up three first-place votes and were not picked below second place on any ballot.

Central College, the 2009 IIAC regular season champion, received the remaining first-place vote and is third in the poll with 61 points, followed by 2009 NCAA qualifier Wartburg College and Simpson College in a tie for fourth place with 47 points. The complete 2010 IIAC softball Coaches' Poll follows.

Rank	School (1st place votes)	Points	2009 Record
1	Coe (5)	67	(41-13, 12-4 IIAC)
	Luther (3)	67	(35-10, 10-5 IIAC)
3	Central (1)	61	(36-8, 13-3 IIAC)
4	Simpson	47	(26-17, 7-8 IIAC)
	Wartburg	47	(37-8, 12-3 IIAC)
6	Dubuque	33	(12-26, 5-11 IIAC)
7	Cornell	32	(18-19, 4-11 IIAC)
8	Loras	22	(14-17, 3-11 IIAC)
9	Buena Vista	20	(8-24, 2-12 IIAC)

**Conference Schedule:** The 2010 Iowa Conference baseball schedule gets underway Saturday, April 3, as eight of nine schools – Dubuque has the opening bye – take to the diamond to open their 16-game league slates. Schools will play a doubleheader against each Conference opponent.

**Conference Tournament:** The 2010 Iowa Conference Softball Tournament will be held May 6-8 and will be hosted by the tournament's top seed. The top two seeds 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.

**New Face in the Dugout:** The only new head coach in the league this year is at Loras where **Ashley Rogers** takes over for **Katie Koopmann** after serving as an assistant coach last season. Rogers, a Dubuque native, was a three-time All-Iowa Conference selection and two-time All-Region player at Wartburg. She was also a four-time First Team All-IIAC pick and the 2007 Iowa Conference MVP in volleyball for the Knights.

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

## Buena Vista University

**2009 Record:** 8-24 overall, 2-12 IIAC (DNQ for IIAC Tournament)

The Beavers will be led by three players who started all 14 of BVU's Iowa Conference games last season as well as their leading pitcher from 2009.

Senior third baseman **Tyonia Zimmerman** was Buena Vista's leading hitter a year ago, hitting .302 with 13 hits, one double, and one home run in 14 games. Senior outfielder **Amy Hasbrouck** and sophomore **Rachael Reicks** each posted a .205 batting average, with Reicks adding a double and Hasbrouck knocking out three doubles, a triple, and five runs scored.

Sophomore pitcher **Chancey Wilcke** appeared in nine games, starting seven, for the Beavers. She posted a 2-6 record with a 4.08 ERA, 28 strikeouts, and five complete games. Wilcke also hit .294 with five hits, two doubles, and four RBI in six IIAC games.

### Quote from head coach Heather Hupke

"We are looking to be competitive and in the mix for the conference tournament."

## Central College

**2009 Record:** 36-8 overall, 13-3 IIAC (Champion; 2-2, third at IIAC Tournament; NCAA qualifier)

The loss of two all-conference players, including the reigning IIAC Pitcher of the Year **Megan Swingen**, might give most cause for worry. That's not the case at Central, however. While they do lose Swingen and two-time all-region selection **Alysha Overturf**, the Dutch do bring back three all-conference players including the league's leading hitter and a Second Team All-IIAC pitcher.

Leading Central's charge in 2010 is sophomore designated player **Rachael Everingham**, a 2009 first team all-conference and all-region pick and a second team all-America selection. Everingham led the IIAC with a .400 batting average, posting 18 hits in 45 at-bats with a double, a home run, 11 RBI, and eight runs scored in 16 IIAC games. She also posted a .489 slugging percentage and ranked eighth in the league with a .449 on-base percentage. Everingham's hit total ranked second only to Luther's Anna Simonson.

In the circle, the Dutch will look to junior **Kiley Lythberg**, a Second Team All-IIAC and a first team all-region pick last season. Working behind Swingen, Lythberg compiled numbers similar to, if not better than, those of her senior counterpart last season. She appeared in 11 IIAC games, posting a 6-2 record with an 0.72 ERA, 42 strikeouts, and two saves. Lythberg also threw five complete games in her 58 2/3 innings. She ranked second in the IIAC in earned run average, third in innings pitched and wins, fourth in opponent's batting average (.173), eighth in strikeouts, and was one of three IIAC pitchers to record a save.

Behind Lythberg will be sophomore second baseman **Angela Davis** and senior third baseman **Afton Nelson**. Davis, a First Team All-Conference pick last season, hit .319 with 15 hits, three doubles, two home runs, and nine RBI in 16 IIAC games. She also stole six bases to rank fifth in the IIAC. Nelson, a third team all-region pick last season and a Second Team All-Iowa Conference pick in both 2007 and 2008, hit .295 with 13 hits, a double, 11 runs scored, and seven stolen bases. She ranked four in the league in stolen bases and eighth in runs scored and posted 45 assists defensively to rank second in that category.

### Quote from head coach George Wares

"As usual, the Conference will be extremely tough. The loss of Swingen and Overturf will be hard to overcome, but with the addition of some very good freshmen, we could be better than last year. However, our schedule is probably as tough as we have ever had."

## Coe College

**2009 Record:** 41-13 overall, 12-4 IIAC (third; 4-0, IIAC Tournament champion; NCAA runner-up)

Coe returns three All-Iowa Conference players from last year's team that surprised many by winning the Iowa Conference tournament as a No. 3 seed and made a historic run through the NCAA Championships which resulted in a national runner-up trophy, but there will be some holes to fill. Gone are IIAC Position Player of the Year **Ashley Leonard** and all-everything utility player **Sonja Schwenker**. Schwenker ranked near the top of both the league's hitting and pitching charts in 2009.

Looking to expand her own role in the circle and to fill some of the void left by Schwenker is sophomore **Ashlee Simon**, a Second Team All-IIAC and all-region pick last year. Simon started eight IIAC games last season, compiling a 6-2 record, a 2.37 ERA and 68 strikeouts in 47 1/3 innings. She also threw five complete games and two shutouts in league play while ranking second in strikeouts, eighth in ERA and limited opponents to a .152 batting average that ranked second league-wide.

Leading the Kohawks in the field will be a pair of seniors – catcher **Abby Wedemeier** and first baseman/outfielder **Chelsea Zaugg**. Wedemeier, who missed Coe's stretch run after being sidelined with an injury against Central in late April, is a 3-time All-IIAC selection who hit .387 in 12 IIAC games with three doubles, a triple, and a home run. Had she played enough league games to qualify, Wedemeier's batting average would have ranked third and her .645 slugging percentage would have ranked fourth. Zaugg hit .265 with six doubles, a home run and eight RBI in 16 IIAC games last season. Her doubles total ranked third in the league.

Another underclassman looking to make an impact is sophomore outfielder **Amanda Hanson**. Hanson played in all 16 IIAC games last season, starting 10 and posting a .308 batting average with eight hits in 27 at-bats, two doubles, a home run, and four RBI.

### Quote from head coach Bob Timmons

"It's going to be interesting to see how many of my returners step up their game and become leaders. We lost a lot of leadership with last year's senior class. I see the Conference being as strong as ever, with Central and Luther leading the way."

## Cornell College

**2009 Record:** 18-19 overall, 4-11 IIAC (seventh; 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 2007. The Rams were on the doorstep a year ago, finishing just one-half game out of sixth place.

Head coach Shanda Ness will have two players with All-Iowa Conference credentials in her lineup as Cornell takes to the diamond this spring. Junior outfielder **Nicole Duncan** and senior shortstop **Jessica Mauser** were each named Second Team All-IIAC. Duncan, who was also a first-team pick in 2008, was Cornell's leading hitter last year, posting a .382 batting average in 39 games. In 15 IIAC games, she hit .302 with 16 hits in 53 at-bats, a league-leading seven doubles, one triple, one home run, and 14 runs scored. Along with leading the league in doubles, she ranked second in runs scored and eighth in stolen bases (4).

Mauser hit .356 in league play, knocking out 16 hits with three doubles, two home runs, and seven RBI in 15 games. Her batting average ranked eighth among IIAC hitters, while her .442 on-base percentage ranked tenth.

The Rams have a pair of sophomore pitchers back who combined to start seven of 15 league games in 2009. **Kim Griseto** started four games and posted a 0-3 record with a 5.25 ERA and 13 strikeouts in eight appearances, while **Jill Trzaska** went 1-4 with a 5.32 ERA and 20 strikeouts, also in eight IIAC appearances. Griseto also started 11 conference games at third base, compiling a team-high .387 batting average in league play with one double and one home run. Her batting average ranked third in the league, while her .457 on-base percentage ranked sixth.

### Quote from head coach Shanda Ness

"We are looking forward to the challenge of competing in the Iowa Conference"

## University of Dubuque

**2009 Record:** 12-26 overall, 5-11 IIAC (sixth; 0-2 at IIAC Tournament)

Dubuque will use a mix of youth and experience as it attempts to qualify for the Iowa Conference tournament for the second consecutive season.

Sophomore pitcher **Kristin Valant** appeared in nine IIAC games, posting a 2-5 record with a 2.33 ERA, 35 strikeouts and three complete games. She ranked sixth in the league in ERA and ninth in strikeouts.

Sophomore catcher **Emilee Stoffer** and senior outfielder **Sondra Grover** hit .277 and .273 in league play, respectively. Stoffer started all 16 games, posting 13 hits, four doubles, and one home run. Grover picked up 12 hits in 14 IIAC games. Sophomore outfielder **Erin Evans** also started all 16 IIAC games and will look to build on a .140 batting average and a year defensively that saw her commit only two errors in the field.

### Quote from head coach Corey Parr

"This year marks the first time in my four years that we will have a strong senior class. I also feel that there are several freshman/transfers that are going to make an immediate impact to the program. Hopefully the combination of the two will help us compete in the always difficult Iowa Conference."

## Loras College

**2009 Record:** 14-17 overall, 3-11 IIAC (eighth; DNQ for in IIAC Tournament)

The Duhawks will rely on a trio of upperclassmen as they try to crack the top six of the Iowa Conference and qualify for the IIAC Softball Tournament for the second time in three years.

Junior centerfielder **Kelsey Techlin** was Loras' top hitter last year in league play, hitting .261 with 12 hits and seven runs scored in 46 at-bats.

Senior second baseman **Michelle Bahl**, a Second Team All-Conference and Third Team All-Region pick in 2008, started all 14 IIAC games, hitting .250 with 10 hits, two home runs, eight RBI, and eight runs scored.

Junior pitcher **Michelle Sabatini** was a workhorse in the circle for the Duhawks last season, starting all 14 IIAC games and tossing 85 1/3 of a possible 88 innings, compiling a 3-11 record with a 6.56 ERA, 43 strikeouts, and 13 complete games. She led the league in innings pitched and was seventh in strikeouts.

### Quote from head coach Ashley Rogers

"The Iowa Conference should once again prove to be very competitive and help bring out the best in our student-athletes. The Duhawks have been working very hard during the first few weeks of practice and we hope to rise to the challenge and continue improving our program."

## Luther College

**2009 Record:** 35-10 overall, 13-3 IIAC (fourth; 3-2, runner-up at IIAC Tournament; NCAA qualifier)

Luther looks to be a serious contender for the 2010 Iowa Conference softball title. The Norse had a league-high six All-Conference selections last season and lost only two to graduation.

Senior second baseman **Anna Simonson** and sophomore third baseman **Lauran Snyder** were each named First Team All-Iowa Conference last season. Simonson, who also picked up first team all-region and second team all-America honors, hit .364 in IIAC play with a league-leading 20 hits in 55 at-bats as Luther's leadoff batter. She ranked fifth in runs scored and seventh in batting average. Snyder hit .381 in league play with 16 hits, four doubles, three home runs, and 12 RBI. She ranked second in slugging percentage (.690) and home runs, fourth in on-base percentage (.458), and fifth in batting average and RBI.

Senior catcher **Tiffany Kruse** and senior outfielder/pitcher **Kelsey Hake** are both back after receiving Second Team All-IIAC honors last season. For Kruse, also a two-time all-region pick, it was her second straight all-league honor. She hit .250 with three doubles, one home run, 11 RBI, and 12 runs scored and made only one error in 118 chances behind the plate for a .992 fielding percentage.

Hake, a third team all-region pick last year, started all 15 IIAC games for the Norse, hitting .333 with 17 hits in 51 at-bats, four doubles, one home run, 16 RBI, and 11 runs scored. She led the league in RBI and ranked fifth in hits and eighth in runs scored. Hake also pitched in two IIAC games last season, posting a 1.62 ERA and two strikeouts in 4 1/3 innings.

Senior **Kim Lambert** will probably handle a bulk of the duties in the circle after posting a 5-1 record with a 2.42 ERA and 49 strikeouts in seven IIAC appearances in 2009. She ranked fourth in strikeouts and ninth in ERA while holding opposing batters to just a .213 batting average in league play, eighth among IIAC pitchers.

Also on the roster is junior pitcher/designated player **Lexy Determan**, a Second Team All-Iowa Conference utility selection last season for Wartburg and a First Team All-Great Plains Athletic Conference pick in 2008 for Northwestern (Iowa). Determan posted a 7-1 mark with a 1.14 ERA and 53 strikeouts in eight IIAC appearances for the Knights. She tied for the league lead in pitching wins, ranked third in strikeouts, fourth in ERA, eighth in strikeouts, and opponents hit a league-low .130 off her.

### Quote from head coach Renae Hartl

"Our goals always include staying healthy, enjoying the process, winning some games, and having a lot of fun. Each of our five seniors (Lambert, Hake, Simonson, Kruse, and Kayla Denner) come into the season with at least three years of starting experience, and are proving to be leaders both on and off the field. Once again, it looks like any program in the top half of the Iowa Conference will be nationally competitive down the stretch."

## Simpson College

**2009 Record:** 26-17 overall, 7-8 IIAC (fifth; 0-2 in IIAC tournament)

Simpson will field a senior-laden line-up in 2010 led by 2008 All-American and two-time First Time All-Conference leftfielder **Kelsie Host**. Host hit a team-leading .347 in conference play with three doubles, one triple, and one home run. She ranked fifth in the IIAC in on-base percentage (.458), fifth in hits (17) and ninth in batting average. Host will be joined in the outfield by senior centerfielder **Kelsey Castenson** hit only .182 in 11 IIAC games, but ended the year hitting .262 with five doubles, one triple, and one home run in 35 games overall.

The Storm will be led in the circle by senior **Whitney Oviatt**, a third-team all-region pick each of the past two seasons. Oviatt shouldered much of the pitching load last season for Simpson, appearing in 13 games (11 starts) and posting a 2-6 record, a 2.94 ERA, 48 strikeouts, and seven complete games. Most of her second-in-the-IIAC 62 innings pitched in league play came against the Conference's top teams. She ranked second in total appearances and games started, fifth in strikeouts, and 10<sup>th</sup> in ERA.

Directly behind Oviatt, seniors **Kortney Proctor** and **Jessica Barkley** return at second and third bases, respectively. Proctor, a Second Team All-IIAC pick a year ago, was second only to Host on the team in hitting in league play with a .326 batting average, three doubles, and one home run. Barkley hit .262 with two doubles, two home runs, and eight RBI while starting all 15 IIAC games for the Storm.

### Quote from head coach Henry Christowski

"We return all but one of our starters from last year and hope that the experience they received last year will pay dividends this year."

## Wartburg College

**2009 Record:** 37-8 overall, 12-3 IIAC (second; 1-2, fourth at IIAC Tournament; NCAA qualifier)

Wartburg fell one-half game short of tying for the IIAC title a year ago, but will need to account for the loss of three All-Conference players as they seek to challenge for the 2010 crown.

The Knights do return junior utility player **Tina Vande Hoef**, a first team all-conference and second team all-region pick in 2009. Vande Hoef started all 15 of Wartburg's IIAC match-ups, hitting .395 with 17 hits, three doubles, three home runs, 12 RBIs, and 10 runs scored. She ranked second in the league in batting average, third in home runs, slugging percentage (.674) and on-base percentage (.480), and fifth in RBI.

Sophomore **Lynn Heitkamp** started seven IIAC games a year ago, posting four hits, one double, one home run, and three RBI. She hit .211 and slugged .421 as a freshman. Pitcher **Jacie Smith**, a fellow sophomore, will be looked at to pick up the slack in the circle where she pitched in one IIAC game for a total of one inning pitched. Overall, she threw in 10 games, posting a 2-1 record with a 1.15 ERA and 20 strikeouts.

### Quote from head coach Kara Kehe

"Our team has shown good improvement to this point, and we're looking forward to getting the playing season underway. With the potential for more growth to occur in the months ahead, consistency on both offense and defense will be a key."