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2009 IOWA CONFERENCE WOMEN'S SOCCER PREVIEW

CEDAR RAPIDS, IOWA . . . Wartburg College, which won the 2008 Iowa Conference Women's Soccer title, but fell in the conference tournament final and was left out of the field for the 2008 NCAA Division III Women's Soccer Championship, is the coaches' pick to win the 2009 Iowa Conference Women's Soccer title, edging defending conference tournament champion **Loras College** by a 70-66 margin.

The Knights received six of eight available first-place votes (coaches are not allowed to vote for their own teams) and two second-place votes, totaling 70 points. The Duhawks received the three remaining first-place votes, four second-place votes and a third-place vote, totaling 66 points in the IIAC Women's Soccer Coaches' Poll.

Luther College, which picked up two second-place, four third-place votes, and two fourth-place votes for 56 points to rank third. **Simpson College** took fourth in the poll with 49 points. The complete 2009 IIAC Women's Soccer Coaches' Poll follows.

Rank	School (1st place votes)	Points	2008 Record
1	Wartburg (6)	70	17-2-2, 8-0-0 IIAC (24 pts.)
2	Loras (3)	66	14-6-3, 6-1-1 IIAC (19 pts.)
3	Luther	56	11-7-2, 5-2-1 IIAC (16 pts.)
4	Simpson	49	11-6-2, 5-2-1 IIAC (16 pts.)
5	Dubuque	45	9-8-3, 4-3-1 IIAC (13 pts.)
6	Coe	37	4-14-0, 1-7-0 IIAC (3 pts.)
7	Central	28	3-15-0, 2-6-0 IIAC (6 pts.)
	Cornell	28	8-10-0, 3-5-0 IIAC (9 pts.)
9	Buena Vista	17	2-16-0, 0-8-0 IIAC (0 pts.)

New Coaches: **Derek Bell**, a former assistant women's coach at University of Wisconsin-Stevens Point, is the new coach at Cornell. He joins the Ram program after assisting the Pointers to back-to-back trips to the sectional round of the NCAA Division III Women's Soccer Championship. Bell replaces **Mike Joyce**. **Greg Velasquez**, an assistant the past four seasons, is the interim head coach at Simpson. He replaces **Cory Chapman**, who resigned in August to accept a position in the athletic department at the University of Minnesota.

Iowa Conference Schedule: The season opens Tuesday, September 1, with eight teams in action. The Iowa Conference schedule opens Saturday, September 26 with a complete schedule of four games.

Conference Tournament: The top-six teams following the regular season round-robin schedule qualify for the 2009 Iowa Conference Tournament with an automatic bid to the NCAA Tournament on the line. The quarterfinal matches, played at the No. 3 and No. 4 seeds, will be November 3 or 4. The semifinals and finals are November 6-7, hosted by the men's top seed.

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



Buena Vista University Beavers
2-16-0 overall, 0-8-0 (0 pts.; 9th)

Head Coach (season): Hunter Balmer (3rd)
Record at School (yrs): 4-32 (2)
Career Record (yrs): same

IIAC Titles (last): n/a
IIAC Tourney Titles (last): n/a

Starters returning/lost – 6 / 5
Letterwinners returning/lost – 6 / 5
All-IIAC players returning – 0
All-IIAC hon. mention returning – 1
(Reitmeier)

Buena Vista returns six starters and six letterwinners from last season's 2-16-0 team that finished ninth in the Conference with zero points and an 0-8-0 record. The Beavers have several strong returners this year, among them junior midfielder **Christina Skaar**, who will anchor the central midfield and provide a number of options. Skaar posted nine points on a goal and seven assists. Junior goalkeeper **Justine McGarvey** played in 16 games last season, compiling a 1-13-0 record with a 5.62 goals-against average, 107 saves, and a shutout. McGarvey and Skaar have been named captains this season. Sophomore forward **Kelsey Reitmeier**, an All-IIAC honorable mention pick in 2008, was the team's leading scorer last season with 15 points on seven goals and an assist. She also netted a game-winning goal and should be a dangerous presence up top throughout the season. Sophomore midfielder **Shannon Cassady** contributed in multiple roles last season, compiling a goal and two assists. Perhaps the BVU's most versatile player, there are a number of spots where she could have a significant impact in 2009.

Buena Vista head coach **Hunter Balmer** says, "The BVU women's soccer team should be considerably deeper and more talented in 2009 with a strong core of returners and some talented newcomers as well. If we can manage to stay healthy and maintain the strong chemistry that was forged during a tough campaign last year, the team should be able to take significant steps forward this fall. If we play to our potential and continue to work hard for each other, the IIAC tournament is a very realistic goal for this young team."



Central College Dutch
3-15-0 overall, 2-6-0 IIAC (6 pts; 7th)

Head Coach (season): Colin Kuchy (2nd)
Record at School (yrs): 3-15 (1)
Career Record (yrs): same

IIAC Titles (last): n/a
IIAC Tourney Titles (last): n/a

Starters returning/lost – 7 / 4
Letterwinners returning/lost – 10 / 5
All-IIAC players returning – 2 (Hindman, Klatt-07)
All-IIAC hon. mention returning – 0

Central returns seven starters and 10 letterwinners from last season's 3-15 team that finished seventh in the Conference with six points and a 2-6-0 record. The Dutch return their top three scorers from last season. Senior midfielder/forward **Jenna Hindman**, a Second Team All-Conference selection in 2008, was the team's top scorer with 14 points on five goals and four assists. Junior midfielder **Kristi Klatt**, a 2007 Second Team All-IIAC pick, was second with 10 points on four goals and two assists. Hindman and Klatt also accounted for two of Central's three game-winning goals last season. Sophomore midfielder/defender **Lacy Merfeld** netted three goals for six points. The Dutch also return goalkeeper **Abby Norman**, who played in 18 games a season ago, accumulating a 2-13-0 record with a 4.61 goals-against average, 155 saves, and one shutout.

Central head coach **Colin Kuchy** says, "I think that the Conference will be more competitive than ever. The gap between the top four will be close and the remainder of the Conference will be fighting for the last spots up until the last weekend of competition. I believe that our season will be more competitive and that we will be a more aggressive program in every game."



Coe College Kohawks

4-14-0 overall, 1-7-0 IIAC (3 pts.; 8th)

Head Coach (season): Homer Screws (3rd)

Record at School (yrs): 8-25-1 (2)

Career Record (yrs): same

IIAC Titles (last): 2 (1998)

IIAC Tourney Titles (last): 2 (1998)

Starters returning/lost – 8 / 3

Letterwinners returning/lost – 11 / 5

All-IIAC players returning – 0

All-IIAC hon. mention returning – 1 (Ridley)

Coe returns eight starters and 11 letterwinners from last season's 4-14-0 team that finished eighth in the Conference with three points and a 1-7-0 league mark. The Kohawks look to junior midfielder **Justine Screws**, sophomore **Taylor Allen**, and senior goalkeeper **Erin Ridley** to anchor the defense. Coe ranked sixth in both goals allowed and goals-against average in 2008. Screws provided a goal and an assist, while Allen notched three goals and an assist to provide some offensive support. Ridley, a two-time honorable mention goalkeeper, was the only goalkeeper the Kohawks used last season, posting a 4-14-0 record with a 2.91 goals-against average, 115 saves, and three shutouts. Sophomore midfielders **Lindsay** and **Sydney Screws** will help direct the Coe offense. Sydney Screws posted two goals and two assists last season.

Coe head coach **Homer Screws** says, "I'm excited about the incoming team and our chances to improving dramatically over last season."



Cornell College Rams

8-10-0 overall, 3-5-0 IIAC (9 pts.; 6th)

Head Coach (season): Derek Bell (1st)

Record at school: 0-0 (first year)

Career Record (yrs): same

IIAC Titles (last): n/a

IIAC Tourney Titles (last): n/a

Starters returning/lost – 5 / 6

Letterwinners returning/lost – 12 / 6

All-IIAC Players returning – 0

All-IIAC hon. mention returning – 0

Cornell returns five starters and 12 letterwinners from last season's 8-10-0 team that finished sixth in the Conference with a 3-5-0 league mark. Junior midfielder **Kelli Ford** is the Rams' top returning scorer from 2008, ranking third on the team with 13 points. She also ranked second on the team with five goals and two game-winning goals and third in assists with three. Junior forward **Jen Swotek** ranked fourth on the team last season with nine points on four goals and an assist in 16 matches. Cornell will also rely on sophomores **Rachel Wynn** and **Rachel Silverstone** for offensive help. Wynn, a forward, and Silverstone, a midfielder, each netted a goal last season. Junior back **Adrianna Montellano** will anchor the Cornell defense. Montellano also contributed offensively, scoring two goals and an assist.

Cornell head coach **Derek Bell** says, "We are looking to make a leap from last year's success. There is a great group of returning players and some new impact players."



University of Dubuque Spartans
9-8-3 overall, 4-3-1 IIAC (13 pts.; 5th)

Head Coach (season): Jason Berna (9th)
Record at School (yrs): 75-68-10 (8)
Career Record (yrs): same

IIAC Titles (last): n/a
IIAC Tourney Titles (last): n/a

Starters returning/lost – 10 / 1
Letterwinners returning/lost – 14 / 2
All-IIAC players returning – 2 (Hamilton, Kittleson)
All-IIAC hon. mention returning – 1 (Mobile)

Dubuque returns 10 starters and 14 letterwinners from last season's 9-8-3 team that finished fifth in the Conference with 13 points and a 4-3-1 record. The Spartans return their top two scorers from 2008 in the form of junior midfielder **Ashly Hamilton** and junior forward **Chelsea Kittleson**. Hamilton, a First Team All-Conference selection, topped the scoring chart, leading the team in points (32), games (14) and game-winning goals (6). Kittleson, a Second Team All-IIAC pick, posted 25 points on eight goals and a team-leading nine assists. Junior midfielder **Maddy Mobile** ranked fifth with two goals and six assists. Junior goalkeeper **Natalie Baker** anchors the UD defense, returning after posting an 8-8-3 record with a 1.05 goals-against average, 97 saves, a .822 save percentage, and seven shutouts. The Spartans ranked third in goals allowed (22) and goals-against average (1.05).

Dubuque head coach **Jason Berna** says, "We gained a ton of experience playing tough teams in 2008 with our young group. I hope this year we can stay healthy and have our best season yet! This year, I think the Conference will be another tight race between the top five-to-six teams for the conference championship."



Loras College Duhawks
14-6-3 overall, 6-1-1 IIAC (19 pts.; 2nd)

Head Coach (season): Dan Rothert (11th)
Record at School (yrs): 145-58-13 (10)
Career Record (yrs): same

IIAC Titles (last): 5 (2007)
IIAC Tourney Titles (last): 7 (2008)

Starters returning/lost – 7 / 4
Letterwinners returning/lost – 14 / 4
All-IIAC players returning – 2 (Messacar, Wilson)
All-IIAC hon. mention returning – 1 (Duffy)

Loras returns seven starters and 14 letterwinners from last year's 14-6-3 team that placed second in the Conference with 19 points and a 6-1-1 record, capturing the league's AQ in a shootout in the IIAC tournament final and advancing to the NCAA Division III Women's Soccer Championship for the seventh time in eight seasons. The Duhawk offense was among the best in the IIAC a year ago, ranking either first or second in goals, assists, and points. Senior midfielder **Holly Wilson**, a Second Team All-Conference selection, was Loras' second-leading scorer a year ago with 26 points on seven goals and a team-high 12 points. Sophomore forward **Kate Young** ranked third with 20 points on five goals and 10 assists. Senior midfielder **Dolly Duffy**, an honorable mention All-IIAC pick, was fifth with five goals, one assist, and a team-high three game-winning goals. Senior midfielder **Samantha Messacar**, a two-time All-Conference selection, added two goals and two assists. Junior defender **Michelle Janosz**, another 2008 honorable mention All-Conference pick, added an assist.

Loras head coach **Dan Rothert** says, "We should be deeper than we have been the past few years. Combine that with the momentum we gained at the end of last season, winning the IIAC tournament and advancing in the NCAA Championship, we are definitely excited about what the season could bring. There will be some very competitive teams in the IIAC, so the Conference title should come down to the wire."



Luther College Norse

11-7-2 overall, 5-2-1 IIAC (16 pts.; t-3rd)

Head Coach (season): Kim Fair (2nd)

Record at School (yrs): 11-7-2 (1)

Career Record (yrs): same

IIAC Titles (last): 3 (2004)

IIAC Tourney Titles (last): 2 (1998)

Starters returning/lost – 8 / 3

Letterwinners returning/lost – 19 / 3

All-IIAC players returning – 6 (Grinde, D.

Meirick, A. Meirick, Torgerson-07, Nerka-07,

Dornfeld-06)

All-IIAC hon. mention returning – 2

(Ofstedahl, Balk-07)

Luther returns eight starters and 19 letterwinners from last season's 11-7-2 team that tied for third in the Conference with 16 points and a 5-2-1 league record. The Norse offense ranked in the top three of nearly every offensive category a season ago and the team returns much of that nucleus. While leading scorer **Emily Ironside** (10G-6A—26P) has graduated, all-conference and all-region selection **Dani Meirick** returns. Meirick, a sophomore forward, ranked second on the team with 25 points on eight goals and a team-high nine assists. 2007 honorable mention selection **Kelsey Balk** ranked third in scoring with seven goals and an assist, while junior midfielder **Anna Grinde**, a First Team All-Conference selection, notched six goals and three assists. Senior defender **Ashley Meirick**, a Second Team All-Conference selection, added three goals and three assists, and 2008 honorable mention selection **Paige Ofstedahl**, a sophomore midfielder, scored three goals and an assist.

Luther head coach **Kim Fair** says, "We look forward to another successful season in the IIAC. We have eight of our 11 starters from last year returning and hope that will give us an edge in our preparation for the season."



Simpson College Storm

11-6-2 overall, 5-2-1 IIAC (16 pts.; t-3rd)

Interim Head Coach (season): Greg Velasquez (1st)

Record at School (yrs): 0-0 (first year)

Career Record (yrs): first year

IIAC Titles (last): 2 (2006)

IIAC Tourney Titles (last): 1 (1999)

Starters returning/lost – 7 / 4

Letterwinners returning/lost – 10 / 9

All-IIAC players returning – 3 (Dillenburg,

Akes, McMahon)

All-IIAC hon. mention returning – 0

Simpson returns seven starters and 10 letterwinners from last season's 11-6-2 team that tied for third in the Conference with 16 points and a 5-2-1 league record. The Storm was the IIAC's top defensive team last season, allowing only 15 goals and posting a 0.76 goals-against average in 19 games. Senior defender **Heather Akes**, a three-time All-Conference selection will anchor a unit that is looking to fill holes created by the graduation of All-Conference performers **Johnna Kripal** and **Whitney Franker**. Up front, Simpson returns its top two scorers from last season – sophomore midfielder **Nicole Dillenburg** and senior midfielder **Mollie McMahon**. Dillenburg, a First Team All-Conference pick last season, posted 21 points on eight goals and five assists, with three game-winning goals. She ranked ninth in the IIAC in goals scored. McMahon added 12 points on five goals and two assists with a team-high four game-winning goals.

Simpson interim head coach **Greg Velasquez** says, "The Storm are entering the 2009 season eager to challenge for the top of the IIAC table. With a strong core of returning players and the largest incoming class in the program's history, Simpson are deeper than in years past and are excited for a competitive fall campaign."



Wartburg College Knights
17-2-2 overall, 8-0-0 IIAC (24 pts; champion)

Head Coach (season): T.J. Buchholz (2nd)
Record at School (yrs): 17-2-2 (1)
Career Record (yrs): 24-12-2 (2)

IIAC Titles (last): 1 (2008)
IIAC Tourney Titles (last): 1 (2007)

Starters returning/lost – 8 / 3
Letterwinners returning/lost – 14 / 5
All-IIAC players returning – 5 (Wendt, Frye, Moore, Thomas, Webb-06 & 07)
All-IIAC hon. mention returning – 1 (Macauley)

Wartburg returns eight starters and 14 letterwinners from last season's 17-2-2 team that won the school's first Iowa Conference women's soccer title with 24 points and a perfect 8-0-0 league mark. The Knights will need to replace **Rachel Oswald**, a two-time Iowa Conference MVP and the league's top scorer in 2008, from the IIAC's top scoring unit last season, but Wartburg's cupboard is far from bare, as the Knights will be return senior **Lauren Thomas** and sophomores **Chelsea Frye** and **Katy Wendt**. Frye, a First Team All-Conference forward as a freshman, was second on the team in scoring with 33 points on 15 goals and three assists. She also had four game-winning goals. Her totals in points, goals, and game-winning goals each ranked third among Iowa Conference players. Wendt, another First Team All-Conference pick, ranked third on the team with 22 points on nine goals and four assists. She also ranked seventh in the IIAC in goals and tenth in points. Thomas, a Second Team All-IIAC pick, added six goals and four assists. Defensively, Wartburg returns senior defender **Logan Webb**, a two-time All-Iowa Conference pick (2006 & 2007), and sophomores **Mackenzie Moore** and **Jess Macauley**. Moore was a Second Team All-IIAC selection while Macauley was honorable mention.

Wartburg head coach **T.J. Buchholz** says, "I hope to build on our team's success last year and to keep improving for this season. The IIAC should be very strong this year from top to bottom and every game should be a great one to watch."

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