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2010 IOWA CONFERENCE WOMEN'S SOCCER PREVIEW

CEDAR RAPIDS, IOWA . . . Wartburg College, which seemingly had the 2009 Iowa Conference title well within reach before injuries at key positions sent the Knights to an 0-3-1 record in their last four games, is the coaches' pick to capture the 2010 IIAC title, edging out 2009 IIAC tournament champion and NCAA participant **University of Dubuque** by four points, 67-63. The Knights received six of eight available first-place votes (coaches are not allowed to vote for their own teams), one third-place vote and one fourth-place vote. The Spartans received two first-place votes and four second-place nods.

Defending IIAC champion **Luther College** picked up the remaining first-place vote, two second-place, four third-place votes, and one fourth-place votes for 59 points to rank third and edge **Loras College** by two points. The complete 2010 IIAC Women's Soccer Coaches' Poll follows.

Rank	School (1st place votes)	Points	2009 Record
1	Wartburg (6)	67	14-3-2, 5-2-1 IIAC (16 pts.)
2	Dubuque (2)	63	15-6-1, 6-2-0 IIAC (18 pts.)
3	Luther (1)	59	10-7-2, 6-1-1 IIAC (19 pts.)
4	Loras	57	12-5-4, 5-1-2 IIAC (17 pts.)
5	Simpson	44	11-8-0, 5-3-0 IIAC (15 pts.)
6	Coe	36	6-12-1, 4-4-0 IIAC (12 pts.)
7	Central	27	1-18-0, 0-8-0 IIAC (0 pts.)
8	Cornell	23	5-12-0, 1-7-0 IIAC (3 pts.)
9	Buena Vista	20	4-13-0, 2-6-0 IIAC (6 pts.)

New Coaches: **Andres Leza**, an assistant at Clarke, is the new head coach at Cornell. He replaces **Derek Bell**, who resigned after one season. At Wartburg, **Sara Johnson** has assumed the head job, taking over for **T.J. Buchholz**, who resigned in late June to become an assistant women's coach at NCAA Division I UC-Riverside. Johnson had been an assistant in the program. **Russ Schouweiler** takes over for **Kim Fair** at Luther. Schouweiler, a 2005 Luther graduate, takes over the Norse program after two years as a women's assistant at Macalester. **Ryan Sander** is now the head coach at Simpson, assuming control of the program from interim coach **Greg Velasquez**. Sander comes to Indianola following an eight-year stint leading the girls' program at Waukee (Iowa) High School. **Tony Tommasi** succeeds **Hunter Balmer** at Buena Vista. Tommasi spent the last four seasons as the head women's coach at Methodist (N.C.) University.

Iowa Conference Schedule: The season opens Wednesday, September 1, with eight teams in action. The Iowa Conference schedule opens Saturday, September 25 with a complete schedule of four games.

Conference Tournament: The top-six teams following the regular season round-robin schedule qualify for the 2010 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 2 or 3. The semifinals and finals are November 5-6, hosted by the men's top seed.

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



Buena Vista University Beavers
4-13-0 overall, 2-6-0 IIAC (6 pts.; 7th)

Head Coach (season): Tony Tommasi (1st)
Record at School (yrs): first year
Career Record (yrs): 103-61-10 (8)

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

Starters returning/lost – 7 / 4
Letterwinners returning/lost – 9 / 7
All-IIAC players returning – 0
All-IIAC hon. mention returning – 2
(Reitmeier, Skaar)

Buena Vista returns seven starters and nine letterwinners from last season's 4-13-0 team that finished seventh in the Conference with six points and a 2-6-0 record. The Beavers return their top three scorers from last season. Junior forward **Kelsey Reitmeier**, a 2008 honorable mention all-IIAC selection, led the team in scoring with 15 points on six goals and three assists. Her six goals were ninth-most among all Iowa Conference players. Senior forward **Christina Skaar**, a 2009 honorable mention selection, ranked second on the team with 12 points on five goals and two assists, while junior midfielder **Kellyn Arnold** led the team with 46 shots and was third on the team with 10 points on four goals and two assists.

Buena Vista head coach **Tony Tommasi** says, "As I am new to the conference, I hesitate to give any sort of prediction of how the season could go. I will say that I am very excited to play in the IIAC, and compete against some of the best teams in the region."



Central College Dutch
1-18-0 overall, 0-8-0 IIAC (0 pts; 9th)

Head Coach (season): Colin Kuchy (3rd)
Record at School (yrs): 4-33-0 (2)
Career Record (yrs): same

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

Starters returning/lost – 9 / 2
Letterwinners returning/lost – 13 / 6
All-IIAC players returning – 1 (Klatt-07)
All-IIAC hon. mention returning – 0

Central returns nine starters and 13 letterwinners from last season's 1-18-0 team that finished ninth in the Conference with zero points and an 0-8-0 record. The Dutch will be young throughout the lineup with only six juniors or seniors on their preseason roster. Senior midfielder/forward **Kristi Klatt**, a 2007 all-IIAC second teamer, accounted for five of Central's 11 goals last season and was the team's leading scorer last season with 12 points. Senior **Brianne Knutson** and junior **Lacey Merfeld** will anchor the back line with Merfeld also seeing time in the midfield along with sophomore **Regan Jamieson**.

Central head coach **Colin Kuchy** says, "Central will look to be more competitive in all games this year and fight for a post season berth for the first time in three years. The IIAC as a whole will be one of the strongest conferences in the Midwest and I believe that there are at least 3 programs that have a legitimate chance to obtain spots in the NCAA tourney."



Coe College Kohawks

6-12-1 overall, 4-4-0 IIAC (12 pts.; 6th)

Head Coach (season): Homer Screws (4th)

Record at School (yrs): 14-37-2 (3)

Career Record (yrs): same

IIAC Titles (last): 2 (1998)

IIAC Tourney Titles (last): 2 (1998)

Starters returning/lost – 8 / 3

Letterwinners returning/lost – 14 / 5

All-IIAC players returning – 1 (Snook)

All-IIAC hon. mention returning – 1 (J. Screws)

Coe returns eight starters and 14 letterwinners from last season's 6-12-1 team that finished sixth in the Conference with 12 points and a 4-4-0 league mark. The Kohawks return their entire offensive output from last season, led by a pair of sophomores in all-IIAC second teamer **Jenny Snook** in the midfield and **Lisa Frank** up front. Snook led the team with 17 points on six goals and five assists, while Frank was second with 11 points on five goals and an assist. Senior **Justine Screws**, an honorable mention all-IIAC pick, was third on the team in scoring with nine points on four goals and an assist, but may see most of her on the back line this season. Junior **Taylor Allen**, who will join Screws on defense, also contributed three goals and an assist. Coe will also need to find a replacement for two-time honorable mention pick **Erin Ridley**, who graduated after spending every minute in goal last season.

Coe head coach **Homer Screws** says, "We are excited for the opportunity to improve on last year's playoff berth."



Cornell College Rams

5-12-0 overall, 1-7-0 IIAC (3 pts.; 8th)

Head Coach (season): Andres Leza (1st)

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

Career Record (yrs): first year

IIAC Titles (last): n/a

IIAC Tourney Titles (last): n/a

Starters returning/lost – 10 / 1

Letterwinners returning/lost – 13 / 8

All-IIAC Players returning – 0

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

Cornell returns 10 starters and 13 letterwinners from last season's 5-12-0 team that finished eighth in the Conference with a 1-7-0 league mark. With virtually their entire starting lineup returning intact, the Rams look to make a move up the table in the Iowa Conference in 2010. The team's efforts will be led by a pair of seniors – striker **Jen Swotek** and midfielder **Kelli Ford** – and junior midfielder **Rachel Wynn**. Swotek was Cornell's leading scorer in 2009, posting 17 points on seven goals and three assists. Ford, an honorable mention all-IIAC pick last season, and Wynn tied for second with nine points apiece.

Cornell head coach **Andres Leza** says, "The women have a solid core group of players. They have a great understanding of each other which will be important to the team's success. We lack team depth so staying healthy and fit will be the key to being competitive and providing an upset or two during conference play and getting into the conference tournament."



University of Dubuque Spartans
15-6-1 overall, 6-2-0 IIAC (18 pts.; 2nd)

Head Coach (season): Jason Berna (10th)
Record at School (yrs): 90-74-11 (9)
Career Record (yrs): same

IIAC Titles (last): n/a
IIAC Tourney Titles (last): 1 (2009)

Starters returning/lost – 8 / 3
Letterwinners returning/lost – 14 / 4
All-IIAC players returning – 6 (Fassbinder-MVP, Rangel, Baker, Mobile, Hamilton, Kittleson-07-08)
All-IIAC hon. mention returning – 0



Loras College Duhawks
12-5-4 overall, 5-1-2 IIAC (17 pts.; 3rd)

Head Coach (season): Dan Rothert (13th)
Record at School (yrs): 171-70-17 (12)
Career Record (yrs): same

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

Starters returning/lost – 6 / 5
Letterwinners returning/lost – 12 / 8
All-IIAC players returning – 3 (Kern, Young, Eslinger)
All-IIAC hon. mention returning – 0

Dubuque returns eight starters and 14 letterwinners from last season's 15-6-1 team that finished second in the Conference with a 6-2-0 record, won the Iowa Conference Tournament, and advanced to the NCAA Division III Women's Soccer Championship. Six all-conference players are back for the Spartans, including 2009 Iowa Conference MVP **Sara Fassbinder**. Fassbinder, a junior, tied with Loras' Kate Young with 31 points to rank highest among all IIAC players. She topped all players with nine assists and was third in goals with 11. Senior **Chelsea Kittleson**, a two-time all-conference selection, is back after an injury-shortened 2009 season where she posted seven goals and four assists in just six games. Center midfielders **Maddy Mobile** and **Ashly Hamilton**, both second team all-IIAC picks last season, will look to control tempo. Hamilton ranked second on the team with 23 points on 10 goals and three assists, while Mobile scored eight points on one goal and six assists. Senior defender **Sidney Rangel**, a first team all-conference player, has the ability to shut down opposing players but can also be a scoring threat after posting 10 points on three goals and four assists in 2009. Senior goalkeeper **Natalie Baker**, a second team all-league pick, ranked second among IIAC players in goals-against average (0.83) and fourth in shutouts (5).

Dubuque head coach **Jason Berna** says, "With an experienced group of returners this year, our expectations are very high to compete well in the IIAC in 2010. We will look to build on the conference tournament championship and National tournament experience we had last season. With five new coaches in the conference this year, it will be exciting to see all the changes and I expect a tight race for the top spot."

Loras returns six starters and 12 letterwinners from last year's 12-5-4 overall and placed third in the Conference with 17 points and a 5-1-2 record. 2009 all-IIAC first teamers **Kate Young** and **Jessica Kern** will lead the Duhawks. Young tied with Dubuque's Sara Fassbinder for tops among all Iowa Conference players with 31 points on 12 goals and seven assists. In eight IIAC games, she scored a league-leading seven goals and 18 points to pace a Duhawk offense that led the league. Kern finished the year with 19 points on six goals and seven assists. In league play, she tied for third in goals with four and tied for fourth in points with 11. Young and Kern will be supported in the midfield by sophomore **Jayne Eslinger** and junior **Tonya Lohmeyer**. Eslinger, a second team all-league pick, started all 21 games scoring five points on two goals and an assist. Lohmeyer scored two goals in 18 games. Junior goalkeeper **Katie Chambers** played in 16 games, posting a 1.13 goals-against average and a .785 save percentage with three shutouts.

Loras head coach **Dan Rothert** says, "Last year showed how close the women's conference race can be as the top five teams were separated by only four points. I expect another tight race this year with some very competitive games. It should be a lot of fun and we have some great ideas how to make the most of our talent, which should be provide a unique and fun style to watch. We like our chances going in and based on what we have returning and the new additions to our program, the season looks to be very promising."



Luther College Norse
10-7-2 overall, 6-1-1 IIAC (19 pts.; champion)

Head Coach (season): Russ Schouweiler (1st)
Record at School (yrs): 0-0 (first year)
Career Record (yrs): first year

IIAC Titles (last): 4 (2009)
IIAC Tourney Titles (last): 2 (1998)

Starters returning/lost – 6 / 5
Letterwinners returning/lost – 15 / 5
All-IIAC players returning – 4 (Grinde, D. Meirick, Ledel, Sojka)
All-IIAC hon. mention returning – (Ofstedahl, Balk-07)

Luther returns six starters and 15 letterwinners from last season's 10-7-2 team that captured the Iowa Conference title with 19 points and a 6-1-1 league record. Senior goalkeeper **Hannah Wright** played every minute in goal for the Norse last season, allowing 17 goals while posting an 0.86 goals-against average and a .798 save percentage. In eight IIAC games, she recorded a league-high five shutouts and allowed only three goals for a 0.36 goals-against average and a .893 save percentage.

Forward **Dani Meirick**, a first-team all-league pick, led all IIAC players with 13 goals last season and ranked third among league players in scoring with 29 points. Midfielder **Anna Grinde**, another first team all-IIAC selection, ranked second on the team in scoring with 13 points, while forwards **Kelsey Balk** (5 goals, 2 assists) and **Kendra Ledel** (4 goals, 4 assists) tied for third with 12 points each. Balk is a senior with honorable mention accolades from 2007 to her name, while Ledel is a junior who was named second team all-IIAC last season. Defender **Samantha Sojka** played in 17 games last year and was named second team all-IIAC. **Paige Ofstedahl** was named all-IIAC honorable mention after posting nine points (4 goals, 1 assist) in 17 games last season.

Luther head coach **Russ Schouweiler** says, "I think the Conference is very competitive and I expect every game to be a challenge. In the end, I expect there to be many teams to be fighting for the championship and we hope to be one of those teams. We have a high level of expectation for ourselves to retain our conference championship title this season."



Simpson College Storm
11-8-0 overall, 5-3-0 IIAC (15 pts.; 5th)

Head Coach (season): Ryan Sander (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 – 8 / 3
Letterwinners returning/lost – 16 / 6
All-IIAC players returning – 2 (Petersen, Dillenburg)
All-IIAC hon. mention returning – 0

Simpson returns eight starters and 16 letterwinners from last season's 11-8-0 team that placed fifth in the league with 15 points and a 5-3-0 league record. The Storm will be led by a pair of first team all-IIAC picks from last year – goalkeeper **Megan Petersen** and midfielder **Nicole Dillenburg**. Petersen, a sophomore, posted an 0.98 goals-against average and an .856 save percentage en route to honors. Dillenburg, a junior, led the team in scoring with 20 points on eight goals and four assists despite playing in only 14 of the team's 19 games. Defender **Kara Lovik** will help anchor the back line in front of Petersen. She started all 19 games last season.

Simpson head coach **Ryan Sander** says, "After finishing fifth in the conference last season and only graduating three seniors from that team, I expect us to make strides to improve our conference record from a year ago. As far as a conference overall, I think that there are some great rivalries in the conference and can't wait to see how they play out this season."



Wartburg College Knights

14-3-2 overall, 5-2-1 IIAC (16 pts; 4th)

Head Coach (season): Sara Johnson (1st)

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

Career Record (yrs): first year

IIAC Titles (last): 1 (2008)

IIAC Tourney Titles (last): 1 (2007)

Starters returning/lost – 7 / 4

Letterwinners returning/lost – 16 / 3

All-IIAC players returning – 4 (Wendt, Frye, Moore-08, Macauley)

All-IIAC hon. mention returning – 2
(Vermie, Benning)

Wartburg returns seven starters and 16 letterwinners from last season's 14-3-2 team that placed fourth in the league with 16 points and a 5-2-1 record. Four all-IIAC players are back for the Knights, including first-teamers **Jess Macauley** and **Katy Wendt**. Macauley and 2008 second team all-league pick **Mackenzie Moore**, both juniors, helped anchor a defense that allowed only 10 goals in 19 games last season. Wendt, also an NSCAA All-North Region selection, ranked third on the team in scoring with 16 points on five goals and six assists. Junior forward **Chelsea Frye** ranked second on the team offensively with 17 points on a team-high seven goals and three assists, while junior forward **Kaylee Benning**, an all-IIAC honorable mention pick, ranked fourth with 15 points on six goals and three assists. Senior midfielder **Taylor Vermie**, another all-league honorable mention pick, ranked sixth on the team with 13 points (6 goals, 1 assist).

Wartburg head coach **Sara Johnson** says, "Wartburg is looking forward to a strong schedule both against teams in conference and our out of conference games. With five new head coaches in the conference this year, the battle for the conference title will be a tight race."

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