

# NAIA HOOPS REPORT

## PRESEASON MAGAZINE

ARC TOP 10'S  
AND LEAGUE  
PREVIEWS

PRE-SEASON  
BRACKETOLOGY  
REPORT

PRESEASON  
TOP 25

PRESEASON  
GOOD AT  
BASKETBALL  
LIST



# All Proceeds From This Years Magazine Will go to Help Montreat Athletics

Let us start off by saying that our thoughts and prayers are still with EVERYONE who was affected by Hurricane Helene. Just devastating to both hear and see the damage and devastation left behind. Not to mention the sadness of people losing their lives as well. Luckily, at Montreat, it sounds like all staff and students are safe. However, the destruction on campus is pretty devastating. As of writing this, classes still haven't resumed on campus. I am sure other schools and programs are seeing damage as well so I want to preface this by saying that the power of social media led me down a rabbit hole one night of watching video after video of the damage that Helene left all over the Southeast. Then, because of covering NAIA basketball and name recognition, I saw a couple of posts out of Montreat, North Carolina, which then led me to a post by a Montreat basketball player, Dyllan Banwell, of video of what I can only describe as a small stream coming from INSIDE the gymnasium. There are other videos and pictures if you need more and want to look them up..

Later, I saw the letter, on the next page, from Montreat Director of Athletics, Garrett Jones, and initially was just going to send over some money. As I went to go grab my card, I knew that my \$100 would be just a small drop in the bucket to help. I thought with the magazine prep going on, maybe there was a way that a bunch of small drops could actually fill the bucket and help more. So, I reached out to their athletics account to get permission and here we are. I know if you are reading this, you most likely are already past the donation part. Thank you for doing that! Again, even if you aren't able to donate, prayers work too!

# Letter from Montreat College Director of Athletics

Our coaches, staff, and faculty have been overwhelmed with everyone who has reached out sending thoughts and prayers our way. They have been deeply felt and welcomed. In an extremely catastrophic time for our campus and region, it has been so humbling to see everyone's love and support for our college, students and student-athletes. I'm excited to report that all our students and staff are safe. All students have evacuated campus and relocated to safe places. Much of our staff has also evacuated the area and are safe. We have so much to be grateful for in that regard.

Many of you have reached out wanting to know how you can help our school and athletic department, and it's been difficult to even begin to process where to start. Tragically, we have had some employees lose their homes and all personal items.

From an athletic facility standpoint, our gym and everything inside is most likely a total loss. This is the central hub for our athletic department and houses our weight room and athletic training room. The following sports contain offices in that facility: Baseball, Men's and Women's Basketball, Men's and Women's Track and Field, Men's and Women's Cross Country, Men's and Women's Tennis, Men's and Women's Golf, Volleyball, Men's and Women's Wrestling, Cheer, Dance and Men's Lacrosse.

Our number one need right now is prayer for our community and region as the death total tragically continues to climb. This is an unprecedented tragedy for our area. However, many of you have asked how you can help, so I wanted to get something out.

The college has set up two separate funds that you can donate to financially: the first is a Campus Recovery Fund, and the second is a Community Benevolence Fund. Every dollar will directly aid in rebuilding our campus and supporting members of our community who have experienced significant property damage or loss.

If you wish to give to a specific program that was impacted, you can designate your gift accordingly.

To donate, please visit [www.montreat.edu/recovery](http://www.montreat.edu/recovery).

Please understand that our programs above have lost virtually everything from our gym. All equipment, gear and uniforms are gone. If you want more specific items about each sport, please feel free to contact me directly.

In closing, I'm privileged to serve alongside a special group of coaches, staff, faculty and student-athletes who make Montreat College the special place that it is. We are blessed with tremendous leadership at the college and a Board of Trustees that cares deeply about this place. Although the days ahead have a lot of unanswered questions, I couldn't be more excited about the future of Montreat College athletics. We serve a big God, and I continue to be blown away by how He uses His people to do amazing things even in the midst of challenging times. If we can do anything to serve you during this time, please don't hesitate to reach out to me directly.

Cavalier Strong,  
Garrett Jones

# Welcome...

Hello, NAIA Hoops Nation! Welcome to another exciting season of NAIA basketball, with the 2024-25 season marking our fifth year of coverage and our third year publishing a preseason magazine! For our returning fans, it's great to have you back; and for those who are new, welcome aboard! We're thrilled to have each and every one of you here. Whether you are a fan, coach, player, or simply curious about NAIA basketball, we hope you find our coverage valuable this season!

We believe that NAIA basketball is at its best now, and we hope that once you finish reading the preseason magazine, you will feel the same way! We don't claim to know everything about NAIA basketball; we certainly make mistakes, overlook teams, and may even overrate some as the season begins. But that's the beauty of the games! If all preseason predictions were accurate, the regular season would be dull.

Our goal is to share as much information as possible with the public, have fun with predictions, and most importantly, bring attention to NAIA basketball! I take great pride in seeing our coverage grow over the past five years, and reaching over 100k views last season was an incredible experience! Thank you all for your support and for making us your top source for NAIA men's basketball coverage. Here's to another fantastic season ahead! I, for one, am becoming a girl dad in January, so my season has already been made!

Junior  
Owner and Founder



Make sure to keep up with all our coverage by liking, subscribing, or following us at:



@NAIAHOOPSREPORT



@NAIA\_HOOPSREPORT

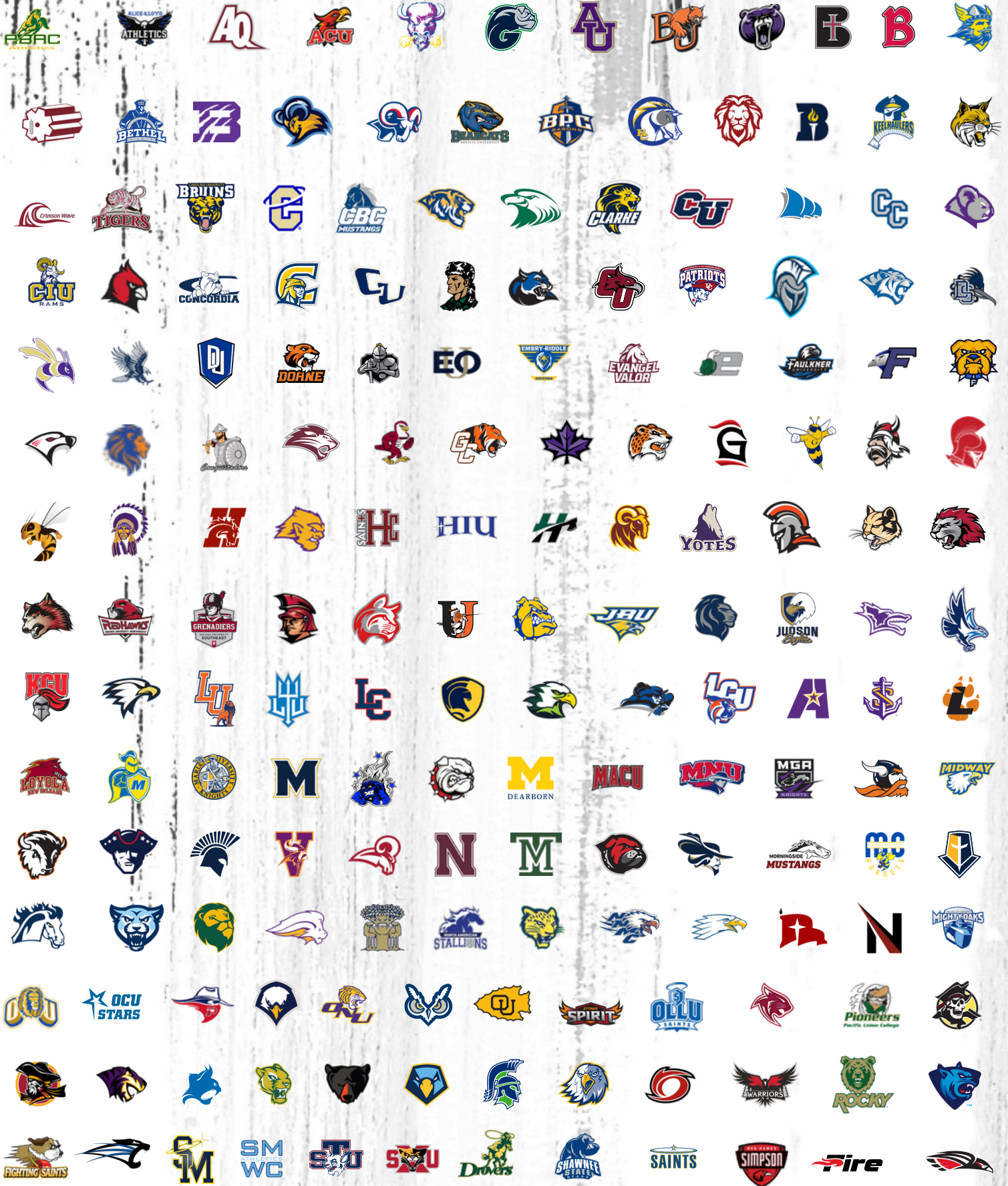


NAIAHOOPSREPORT2059



# 2024-25 NAIA MBB TEAMS

## 225 Men's Teams












# 2024-25 NAIA MBB TEAMS (continued)



## NEW THIS YEAR

### New Teams

-  Carolina University (NC) Bruins
-  Texas A&M University-San Antonio Jaguars
-  Spartanburg Methodist College (SC) Pioneers
-  New College of Florida Mighty Banyans
-  Mission University (MO) Patriots
-  Defiance College (Oh) Yellow Jackets
-  Columbia College (SC) Koalas
-  IU - Columbus Crimson Pride
-  Abraham Baldwin Agricultural College (GA) Golden Stallions

### New League Names



# This is NAIA Basketball...

Maybe it's the optimist in me, but it is really fun seeing where NAIA basketball is right now.

There truly are so many really good players coming through every year. Sure, it's not always fun seeing a player leave for the D1 levels but think about it. For years we have all been preaching "there are god players at every level" it just so happens that D1 coaches now agree and are recruiting those good players! I say all of that because I would assume that this past offseason is the most we have seen of players making the move from NAIA to D1. You don't have to love the transfer portal, but it's the world we live in and for us, it's awesome seeing "just an NAIA guy" find success at bigger levels.

For 2023-24, it was the Freed-Hardeman Lions who came away with the NAIA National Title. The second time, since the merger, that a team from the Mid-South won a National Title. Which is quite fun, since the league is down to just 6 teams now.

Grace (IN) big fella, Elijah Malone, won NAIA National Player of the Year. In the four seasons of one division ALL four NPOY winners were guys who played 4yrs of NAIA basketball:

2021 Kyle Mangas - Indiana Wesleyan

2022 Zach Wrightsil - Loyola

2023 Mason Walters - Jamestown

2024 - Elijah Malone - Grace

We will look more at the trend in our Preseason "Good at Basketball." Team. For those of you who are new around here. "Good at Basketball." has been a way for us to have some fun to describe great players or great performances over the past few years. Our "Preseason "Good at Basketball" Team is basically our Preseason All-American list.

I know we are all excited for the season to arrive and games to be here! Leagues will start releasing their own preseason rankings and media days over the next week!

Past 4  
Champions



# DEFENDING

*National*  *Champions*

# FREED-HARDEMAN



MARSHON AUDEBRET (2007)  
Eight National Champion  
1994, 1995 & 1996







# PRESEASON GOOD AT BASKETBALL. TEAM



# GOOD AT BASKETBALL.

## TOP 20



### 4th/5thyr Seniors

**KALEB** *Lowery*

**JAMISON** *Guerra*

**DREW** *Wyman*

**LANE** *Sparks*

**JADEN** *Lietzke*

**COLLIN** *Parker*

**EZRA** *McKenna*

**IAN** *Scott*

**DJ Talton Jr**

**NOAH** *Schutte*

**NOAH** *Schutte*

### Underclassman And Transfers

**KASHIF** *Natt*

**ALEX** *Van Kalsbeek*

**SAMAI** *Morgan*

**JOSHUA** *Smith*

**VINCENT** *Miszkiewicz*

**DAVION** *Coleman*

**JORDAN** *Stephens*

**MIKE** *Penke*

**GAB** *Newhof*

**TRENT** *Rodgers*

**TRENT** *Rodgers*

# PRESEASON

## Top 25



1  **LANGSTON**

2  **COLLEGE OF IDAHO**

3  **GEORGETOWN (KY)**

4  **INDIANA WESLEYAN**

5  **ARIZONA CHRISTIAN**

6  **FREED-HARDEMAN**

7  **GRACE (IN)**

8  **OKLAHOMA WESLEYAN**

9  **THE MASTER'S (CA)**

10  **LSU-ALEXANDRIA**

- 11  LSU-SHREVEPORT
- 12  MONTANA TECH
- 13  NORTHWESTERN (IA)
- 14  CUMBERLANDS (KY)
- 15  CONCORDIA (NE)
- 16  AVE MARIA
- 17  OREGON TECH
- 18  FLORIDA MEMORIAL
- 19  LEWIS-CLARK STATE (ID)
- 20  CENTRAL BAPTIST (AR)
- 21  KEISER (FL)
- 22  MADONNA (MI)
- 23  BAKER (KS)
- 24  COLUMBIA (MO)
- 25  LIFE (GA)

# NORTH CENTRAL ARC



## PRESEASON TOP 10

1. NORTHWESTERN (IA)
2. CONCORDIA (NE)
3. IU NORTHWEST
4. DORDT (IA)
5. MORNINGSIDE (IA)
6. ST. FRANCIS (IL)
7. BELLEVUE (NE)
8. OLIVET NAZARINE (IL)
9. DICKINSON STATE (ND)
10. IU SOUTH BEND





CHICAGOLAND COLLEGIATE ATHLETIC CONFERENCE

PREVIEW

# CCAC Preview

The Chicagoland Conference is a 12-team conference that consists of teams from Illinois, Indiana, Iowa and Wisconsin

The CCAC appears to be top-heavy once again. With the defending champions, Roosevelt, moving up to NCAA D2, we anticipate that the current CCAC tournament champions, IU Northwest, will emerge as early favorites. The Redhawks bring back five starters, three of whom earned All-CCAC honors last season, including the sole returning First Team CCAC player, Dannie Smith. As the season begins, they seem to be in a league of their own.

Nevertheless, don't underestimate ONU and IU South Bend in the CCAC. Both teams are exceptionally well-coached and, while they may have lost some elite talent, they are likely to improve as the season progresses!

If they can maintain their health, Saint Francis (IL) is a team worth watching, as they could make notable strides in the standings this year. The return of Aitor Anabitarte from injury, alongside Rahmel Davis, could position them as serious contenders!

This season is set to showcase five or six teams vying closely for position within just a few games of one another, paving the way for another thrilling season and an unpredictable CCAC tournament!

## What's New?

In



Viterbo

Out



Roosevelt

## Coaches



Jason Hawkins



Tyler braidic



David Osborn

2023-24 Regular Season Champion



2023-24 Tournament Champion



2023-24 National Tournament Qualifiers



Deepest Tournament Run Since Merger

Round of 32 (2022)



Last National Title Winner

2013





# Favorite



The Redhawks were one of the most formidable teams in the nation during the latter part of last season, having lost only four games in the second semester on their journey to claim the CCAC tournament championship. In the 2024-25 season, the Redhawks will see the return of all five starters from last year, including first-team All-CCAC selection and CCAC Newcomer of the Year, Dannie Smith. Additionally, second-team members Trace Williams and Anthony Taylor will also be back in action for the Redhawks. Demarius Splunge, Jaylen Jennings, and Ladaion Barries are returning as well. This means that 82% of last season's scoring is coming back.

# Other Contenders



ONU boasts one of the most tradition-rich programs in the league. They have celebrated six consecutive CCAC Player of the Year winners, including last year's 2nd team All-American, Tyler Schmidt. The Tigers face a significant challenge as they return only 23% of their scoring from the previous season. Caleb Swearingen is the only returning starter, and you can expect his role to expand significantly. The same goes for Daniel Murphy, Caleb Corro, and Eli Edwards. Coach Nick Birkey is an exceptional coach, and he will have the Tigers competing at a high level by the end of the season!



It's perfectly reasonable to wonder why we're so enthusiastic about a team that finished with a 10-16 record last year. However, the Saints faced significant challenges due to injuries, including the absence of Aitor Anabitarte, who missed the entire season. The last time we saw the Spaniard, he was dominating the scoreboard and leading the Saints in scoring, earning him 2nd team All-CCAC honors. If he returns to full health, he is a genuine candidate for CCAC Player of the Year. With him alongside 2nd team selection Rahmel Davis and other talented players, this team has the potential to make some noise.



IU South Bend consistently contends for a CCAC title. Replacing the departed senior and two-time All-American Dejon Barney is a significant challenge, but the Titans are not lacking in talent as they bring back Julien Petty, Quentez Columbus, and Nick Mullen. Additionally, they have welcomed two promising transfers, Kyle Millender and Shawn Brown. However, their depth will rely heavily on younger players, making this a team that could improve steadily throughout the season as those young talents gain experience.



Saint Xavier bids farewell to Cedric Johnson, who ranked second in scoring in the CCAC last season. However, they still boast a strong core of returning players, highlighted by Andre Brandon (2nd Team All-CCAC) and Kevin Bishop (Honorable Mention All-CCAC). Additionally, they will incorporate D2 transfer Jordan Jackson along with a roster of JUCO players to bring in valuable experience.

# Sleeper Teams



Oh, when the saints, oh, when the saints, oh, when the saints come marching in! Let's give a nod to Saint Ambrose, adding to our trio of saints here in the CCAC! Ray Shovlain has been the head coach for the Bees for an impressive 41 seasons. Last year, they finished sixth in the league but demonstrated their ability to compete with nearly everyone; the only top team they didn't split games with was Roosevelt. They are returning all but one player from last year, and although they need to play more consistently, Will Spriggs (2nd Team All-CCAC) and his teammates certainly have the potential to take that next step.



I'm unsure if the Trolls can clinch the league title in Coach Osborn's first year. However, what I do know is that Coach Osborn has been part of a winning program for the past six seasons as an assistant at Indiana Wesleyan. Additionally, he has recruited two standout guards: Julius Byrd from South Suburban and Marcus Green from Chaffey. Green was a joy to watch during his freshman year at Arizona Christian. Like many freshmen, he experienced some ups and downs, but he managed to score in double figures in seven games. Julius Byrd is a tough guard with excellent passing skills. While the Trolls may lack size, I anticipate they will be a formidable challenge for opponents throughout the season!

## CCAC Predictions: 2 Auto-bid League

Regular Season Champ

Tournament Champ

National Tourney Qualifiers







PREVIEW

# GPAC Preview

The Great Plains Athletic Conference is a 12-team conference that consists of teams from Iowa, Nebraska and South Dakota.

There is only one league that has sent two teams to Kansas City every year since the merger, and that is the GPAC! Unfortunately, there seems to be a barrier in the NAIA quarterfinals, as no team has advanced to the NAIA Fab Four.

The GPAC is known to be a tough league. Over the past five seasons, the regular season champion has had between 4 to 5 losses, and there have been 5 to 6 teams all within 1 to 2 games of first place. Expect a similar scenario this season.

Northwestern, CUNE, Morningside, and Dordt are the early favorites. Is that taking the easy road?! Sure, but it's simply the reality of how this league operates!

Even outside of that group, Todd Raridon has really had Hastings playing impressive basketball since taking over at Hastings. They will miss the reigning GPAC Player of the Year, Reggie Thomas, so it will be interesting to see how the Broncos perform this season. Briar Cliff, also, is a team to watch, as they return their top four scorers, including Matthew Stilwill, who ranked second in the league for scoring last year! Just a fun league, everywhere you turn.

## What's New?

IN



jamestown

OUT



waldorf

Coaches



Kevin Williamson



Demitrius Martin

gpac network



2023-24 Regular Season Champion



Champion of the 2023-24 Tournament



2023-24 National Tournament Qualifiers



Deepest Tournament Run since merger

Quarterfinals (2021) Quarterfinals (2022)



Quarterfinals (2024)



last national title winner

2003





## Favorites



Fresh from a trip to the Round of 16 last season, Northwestern is poised to be an early favorite to claim the GPAC title this year. They welcome back Second-Team All-American Alex Van Kalsbeek, along with All-GPAC players Zach LaFave and Kaleb Booth. While they will miss Dillon Carlson and Craig Sterk, legendary coach Kris Korver consistently keeps the Raiders as strong contenders year after year.



Noah Schutte, Tristan Smith, and Brad Bennett—what a trio! They might just be one of the best returning groups in the country. Last year, we humorously referred to it as "Noah Schutte and the Baby Bulldogs." Well, those pups have matured, and veteran Schutte is back for his fifth year, ready to tackle some unfinished business! The Bulldogs are bringing back their top nine players from a team that reached the Round of 32 last season.

## Other contenders



Speaking of excellent trios, Dordt is reintroducing their impressive trio of Lucas Lorenzen, Luke Rankin, and Bryce Coppock. Coach Van Haaften's team faced a challenging opening round last year, having to travel to Michigan for a true road game, and they fell just short. This is a solid, experienced group that has played many games together. They are not only poised to make an impact in the GPAC, but also on a national level!



Joey Skoff and Aidan Vanderloo enhance the Mustangs' scoring ability from the perimeter. While the team will be somewhat undersized until Dylan Johnson returns from last season's ACL injury, it will be interesting to see how Coach Trent Miller adapts his strategy with this group. There is ample scoring potential to remain competitive. Anticipate a scrappy, tough defense from the Mustangs!

## Sleeper Teams



Briar Cliff brings back three All-League players, including 1st Team All-GPAC member, Matthew Stillwill. What excites us about this year's team is the addition of 6'7 JUCO transfer, Ikenna Ude-Smith, who complements the returning players perfectly. They demonstrated potential last season, though consistency was a challenge. Can they take that next step forward this season? If they can, they might find themselves in the competition.



NEW DWU HEAD COACH, Kevin Williamson, achieved remarkable success at the University of Saint Katherine. With experience in coaching at national tournaments and winning conference titles, he brings valuable expertise. Although the GPAC presents new challenges, he had a talented roster at USK. While immediate success may not be expected in the first year, he is welcoming back Jakob Dobney, a second-team All-GPAC member, along with GPAC Freshman of the Year, Randy Rosenquist, and Honorable Mention GPAC selection, Sam Aslesen. Additionally, he is bringing in four strong transfers, led by Tampa Scott IV, who excelled as an All-League performer at USK under his guidance.

## GPAC predictions

Regular Season Champ



2nd Auto-bid



National Tourney Qualifiers





PREVIEW

# NSAA Preview

The North Star Athletic Association is a 6-team league that consists of teams of teams from Nebraska, North and South Dakota.

This year marks the conclusion of the North Star Athletic Association. Following this season, Jamestown will make the move to NCAA Division II, while most other teams will join the Frontier Conference.

After being voted out of the GPAC in their final year as an NAIA member, Jamestown enters the NSAA and is poised to bring excitement to this last season of the league.

The competition in this league is once again wide open. Mayville State will return the reigning Player of the Year, Darren Jones. Dickinson State, overall, has the best group of returns back. Jamestown and Bellevue probably the two most talented teams overall in the league.

Ultimately, Bellevue is likely to be the favorite in the NSAA, but as we've seen in previous years, expect 3-4 teams to be in contention all the way up to the final week of the season.

## New To League

in



JAMESTOWN

out



VITERBO

out



Waldorf

## Coaches



Casey Bruggeman

2023-24 regular season champion



2023-24 tournament Champion



2023-24 national tournament qualifier's



Deepest Tournament Run since merger

No Team has ADVANCED OUT OF 1ST ROUND

Last National Title Winner



## Favorites



The defending league champions are favored here, returning four out of five starters, including leading scorer TJ Fritz, NSAA Tournament MVP Emarr Vinson, and First Team All-Defense member Liam Thompson. They also welcome back a trio of redshirts, including RJ Smith, who transferred from Yuba College and was named First Team All-Bay Valley in 22-23. Coach Gabriel has found great success recruiting from California junior colleges, and this year he secured another standout player in Willie Williams from CCSF! With the addition of 6'8" freshman Matt Mathok, the Bruins appear poised to defend their NSAA title.



Dickinson State is set to welcome back nearly all of its players, including their entire all-league backcourt of John Evans (NSAA First Team) and Trey Stevens (NSAA Second Team). Additionally, big man Gus Wright, who sat out the second semester last year, is also poised to return, making the Blue Hawks a serious contender. Coach Derek Selvig has done an excellent job with the Blue Hawks, and you can anticipate their strong push for an NSAA title this year!



The Jimnies are currently experiencing a "layover" in the NSAA before making their transition to NCAA D2. As a result, their non-conference schedule features a blend of D2 and NAIA matchups. They welcome back three players who received All-GPAC honors, including Silas Bennion, who was named to the GPAC First Team. In total, the Jimnies are bringing back ten players and will also be adding four transfers to enhance their roster. For context, last season, the Jimnies achieved a record of 5-1 against NSAA opponents, with their sole loss being a narrow five-point overtime defeat to Dickinson State.

## Contenders



Former Mayville State head coach, Darren Tighe, begins his second year at Dakota State. The Trojans welcome back NSAA Freshman of the Year Brayden Pankonen, along with Mayville State transfers Taine Mitchell and Colby Dillenbeck, both of whom redshirted last season. Additionally, they expect to have Ethan Slaathaug returning from his torn ACL. A trio of transfers will also join the team: Aiden Jensen from Mount Marty will add size, Spencer Utchison from the University of Iowa brings a strong wing presence, and senior guard Kam Givens will contribute valuable leadership. The rest of the roster includes promising freshmen who will need to mature quickly!



Mayville State's Darren Jones earned Third Team All-American honors last season after being named NSAA Player of the Year. The Comets also welcome back JJ White, who averaged nearly 10 points per game. This year, they will have a new and larger supporting cast, Justin Fisher joins from Chandler-Gilbert Community College, where his team won a league championship, and he was recognized as an All-League player and named Defensive Player of the Year. It promises to be an exciting team to watch once they start clicking!

---

## NSAA Predictions

Regular Season Champ



National Tourney Qualifiers



# MIDWEST ARC



## PRESEASON TOP 10

1. OKLAHOMA WESLEYAN
2. CENTRAL BAPTIST (AR)
3. BAKER (KS)
4. COLUMBIA (MO)
5. KANSAS WESLEYAN
6. PERU STATE
7. MID-AMERICA NAZARENE (KS)
8. EVANGEL (MO)
9. CENTRAL METHODIST (MO)
10. WILLIAM WOODS (MO)





PREVIEW



# AMC Preview

The American midwest Conference is a 10-team conference that consists of teams from ARKANSAS AND Missouri.

Last year, we mentioned that the AMC could significantly improve its national standing by securing victories in national tournaments. Central Baptist made an impressive deep run, reaching the National Quarterfinals, while Columbia (MO), as the 15-seed, put up a fierce fight against NAIA powerhouse Indiana Wesleyan in what might have been the best game of the opening round, ultimately losing 105-99 in double overtime.

Both Central Baptist and Columbia are expected to be the top contenders for the league title once again, as they return a majority of their rosters.

William Woods will also be in contention. Coach Jordan Ashton has assembled an experienced and talented group, along with some promising transfers to strengthen the team's depth. Missouri Baptist is coming off a successful season with 21 wins, competing for the AMC tournament title. Following the season, Assistant Taylor Jarvis has been promoted to head coach. With a lot of "shifting" going on around the NAIA, the door is open for teams, all across the NAIA to maybe get an extra team into the tourney. As of right now, we think William Woods could give the AMC an at-large option this season (predicting that CBC and Columbia win the auto-bids).

## New to League

IN



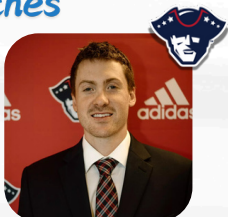
Mission

IN



Crowley's Ridge

## Coaches



Dallas Minders



Taylor Jarvis

2023-24 Regular Season  
Champion



2023-24 Tournament  
Champion



2023-24 National  
Tournament Qualifiers



Deepest Tournament Run  
since merger

QUARTERFINALS (2024)



LAST NATIONAL TITLE  
WINNER



## Favorite



The Mustangs will undoubtedly feel the absence of Deshawn Coprew; however, they return four starters from last year's team that made it to the NAIA Quarterfinals. Leading the charge is Sage Borbon, who was named the AMC Tournament MVP. Alongside him, Jonas Carlisle, Wade Williams, and Devin Foster, who led the AMC in blocked shots, provide a solid starting core for the Mustangs. Savaughn Smith is also returning to the team. Rejoining the Mustangs after a year at D2 is 2023 All-Conference selection Gabe Johnson. His D2 teammate, Ddaquarius Harris, will join him as well.



The reigning AMC Player of the Year and a member of the Third Team All-American, Collin Parker, is returning alongside Isaiah Holden (AMC Second Team) and Harrison Vickers (AMC Third Team) to lead the Columbia team, which retains five of its top eight players from last year's national tournament squad. Additionally, the Cougars are welcoming Seth Larson (Second Team All Heart) and NCAA D2 transfer Kai Steinman. Missouri 6A state champion, Nashawn Davis, is also anticipated to make a significant contribution this year! A group who has a shot to get some good non-conference wins early!

## Other contenders



William Woods possesses the talent to vie for an AMC title. A significant factor in this is the return of two All-AMC First Team players: Henry Shannon III and Francis Okwuosah, who was also named AMC Newcomer of the Year, along with Nate Schwartze, who made the AMC Third Team. The Owls are also bringing in D'Mari Wiltz, a former honorable mention All-AMC selection, and Ahlante Askew from John Brown. With their impressive size, scoring ability, and depth, they have the potential to be a formidable team if they can bring it all together!



Taylor Jarvis steps into the role of head coach as he shifts over one seat following Preston Ingram's departure (D2 Maryville). There's a lot to be excited about regarding MoBAP as the season approaches. Brevan McMullen (HM All-AMC) returns a solid group of five players, all of whom had significant playing time, with four starting games for the Spartans last season. Jarvis's inaugural recruiting class has the potential to be impressive beginning with Taiden Conner (NW Kansas Tech), a JUCO Top 100 player and honorable mention. Additionally, they have secured two D2 transfers: Austin Lewis (Midwestern State) and Thai Elder (Cameron). JUCO transfers Zeke Thompkins (Ellsworth) and Moses Gordon (Polk) are also expected to contribute valuable depth and experience.

## Sleeper Team



This marks Mission University's inaugural official year in the NAIA, but they have faced NAIA teams for several years, equipping them with the experience needed to compete. Last season, they achieved a 4-3 record against AMC opponents, despite having an entirely new team and struggling with consistency. This year, they welcome back six of their top seven players, including Jacques Thomas and Elijah Smith, who have proven to be challenging for NAIA teams. Additionally, Dallas Meinders, who stepped in for his father, has done an excellent job of recruiting players with size to strengthen the team.

## AMC Predictions

Regular Season Champ

2nd Auto-bid Production

National Tourney Qualifiers





**HEART OF AMERICA**  
ATHLETIC CONFERENCE

PREVIEW

# Heart Preview

The Heart of America is a 13-team conference that consists of teams from Iowa, Kansas, Missouri and Nebraska.

The Heart of America has a rich tradition. As recently as 2018, it put two teams, William Penn and Graceland, into the NAIA Division I Fab Four, culminating in Graceland's championship win. Hopefully, the league can get back to deep March Runs.

As we look to the 2024-25 season, Baker emerges as the early favorite. Peru State, MidAmerica Nazarene, Central Methodist and Graceland are also teams to keep a close eye on.

There are five teams who start the season with a legit chance to make the tourney. We will see what that number ends up being, but as we have said about a lot of leagues for years now, winning the big non-conference games can help you out a lot in March!

It should be a really fun year in the Heart as it could be very crowded at the top!

2023-24 Regular Season  
Champion



Champion of the 2023-24  
Tournament



2023-24 National  
Tournament Qualifiers



Deepest Tournament Run  
Since Merger

Round of 16 (2022 & 2023)



last national title winner

2018



## Favorite



Lots to like about this Baker Squad! With back-to-back trips to the NAIA National Tournament and the return of 11 players from last year's team, the Wildcats are poised for success. They'll be spearheaded by Quentin Harvey (1st Team All-Heart) and Noah Rigatuso (1st All-Heart). The firepower is further enhanced by Ty Henry (2nd Team All-Heart), Korey Jones (HM All-Heart), along with Ahmed Mahgoub and Nick Whittick. Coach Sean Dooley and his staff have also brought in Kaimen Lennox from Wayne State (MI), adding another scoring threat to the team.

## Other contenders



Carlos Hines (HM All-Heart) and Ajante Hogan (HM All-Heart) are back for the Bobcats, who finished last season with a 20-12 record and secured a tournament title. They welcome Devin Tomlinson, who claimed a national championship with Freed-Hardeman last year, along with Lamar Lovelace from Niagara CC, who was recognized as a First Team JUCO All-American last season. Chris Peoples from D2 LeMoyne-Owen led his league in assist-to-turnover ratio last year, and Aaron Miller, who started games for D2 Western New Mexico, will bring valuable experience to the team.



Four starters are back from a team that finished with a 23-10 record last season, which included a run to the Heart Tournament Title game. The Wildcats qualified for the NAIA national tournament, securing a significant road victory over SAGU before falling to Evangel in the round of 32. Baker is bringing back four All-Heart performers, including first-team selection Quentin Harvey. Overall, the Wildcats are returning 85% of their scoring from the previous season. Additionally, they welcome D2 graduate transfer Kaimen Lennox, who made 28 starts during his two years at Wayne State (MI).



With the loss of four players from the 1st and 2nd All-Conference teams, Coach Matt Sherman and his staff hit the transfer market this summer, bringing in seven transfers to strengthen their chances for a championship title. This group is both long and athletic, and they should complement each other effectively. Notably, Brandon Tchouya from Laramie County has the potential to emerge as one of the top players in the league due to his impressive size and length. The Eagles also welcome Mario Fantina from Ark-Monticello, Kai Jordan from Columbia (CA), Destin Jenkins from Cetro Coso CC, Bol Tong from Wayland Baptist, Will Hemme from Northwest WY, and Kevin James from Dominican.



Another team who has lost some key players from the previous year. However, one standout aspect we've observed from Head Coach Todd Lorenzen, both at Mount Marty and Graceland, is his exceptional coaching ability and the solid foundation he has built for the team. The Yellow Jackets welcome back two returning starters: Darrius Davis and Carson Busch. Additionally, Kevin Cook, who redshirted last season, shows potential as a breakout candidate. Cole Bowen from Mount Marty was selected as an Honorable Mention in the all-GPAC last year. Completing the roster are Micah Lambeth, who started 27 games at D2 CSU Pueblo, and Siddiq Cantij, who won a national title at National Park. With this lineup, Graceland is poised to compete for the Heart!

## Sleeper Teams



Missouri Valley finished last season with an 11-13 record, but they bring back all five starters, including five HM ALL-Heart members. While their scoring was fairly balanced last year, there's potential for a player like Jace Lance to make significant strides. If you followed our magazine last year, you're aware of Jace's heart condition that almost took his life. It was inspiring to see him back on the court last season. Two years removed from that incident and a full offseason, I think we see a big year out of him, which in return will elevate those around him. MVC has added size and depth, along with the experience needed to climb the HEART standings this year, we will see if they can make a run at a national tourney bid!

## Heart Predictions

Regular Season Champ



2nd Auto-bid Prediction



National Tourney Qualifiers





# PREVIEW

# KCAC Preview

The **KANSAS COLLEGIATE ATHLETIC CONFERENCE** is a 14-team conference that consists of teams from Kansas, Missouri, Nebraska, Oklahoma

The KCAC has successfully placed two teams into the Round of 16 in three of the last four years. The only exception was in 2023, when no teams made it to Kansas City. Much like the GPAC, they seem to struggle with advancing past the NAIA quarterfinals.

As we approach the 2024-25 season, it is expected that OKWU will be the leading favorite. The Eagles feature one of the top duos in the nation, with two genuine NAIA Player of the Year candidates: Jaden Lietzke and DJ Talton Jr. Additionally, Kansas Wesleyan's Alex Littlejohn, another NAIA Player of the Year contender, will aim to guide KWU to a KCAC title.

The competition beyond these top two teams could be quite intriguing, with Saint Mary (KS), Southwestern, Evangel, and McPherson all poised to be in the running as well.

2023-24 Regular Season  
Champion



2023-24 Tournament  
Champion



2023-24 National  
Tournament Qualifiers



Deepest Tournament Run  
Since Merger

Quarterfinals)

2022

2024



Last National Title Winner

2009



## WHAT I

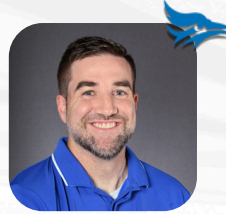
### Coaches



Maverick Harris



Matt Cross



Josh Roach



## Favorite



They are certainly the top contenders for the KCAC title, boasting two strong NPOY candidates: Jaden Leitzke and Dj Talton Jr. Additionally, Dylan Phillip is returning to the Eagles. With three starters back and eight of their top ten players returning, they will merge last season's squad with two new transfers: Yashi McKeitzie from Southern Ark Tech JC and Justin Haynes from SW LA CC. As is often the case with the Eagles, an outstanding freshman is typically added to their lineup, and Jensen Knowles from Texas appears ready to shine this year. The Eagles are anticipated to be a top 10 team as the season begins.

## Other contenders



Alex Littlejohn and his team fell just two games short of securing the KCAC title last season. They bring back five skilled players who have gained valuable experience and numerous victories throughout their careers. Easton Hunter returns for his fifth year after starting the previous four seasons. Isaiah Hale, who earned honorable mention all-league, is also back. Add in Grant Dye who led the KCAC in 3pt percentage and Caden Hale, who has backed up Jun Murdock the past few seasons. Coach Monson and staff also brought in seven transfers to help add depth and size to the lineup as they look to make it to their 4th straight NAIA national tourney.



DO NOT UNDERestimate their talent just because many of their players graduated after last season's NAIA quarterfinal run. They return three key starters: Garrett Davault, Manrique Alvarado, and Josh Mason, along with Carson Cavalier. Notably, they redshirted five freshmen last season, preparing for the return of all their fifth-year players. Coach Capel and his staff clearly have confidence in these young athletes, as they only recruited two transfers: Bryce Ware from Jacksonville College and Dane Foster from Lincoln Land CC.



There's no denying that Southwestern experienced the most considerable losses in the KCAC last season. Nevertheless, it's difficult to overlook their potential, as Coach Matt O'Brien has proven skilled at tackling KCAC challenges, with an impressive record of 13 consecutive winning seasons and seven seasons with 20 or more wins in the past eight years. Leading the returning players is Justin DeMaria (HM All-Conference), while Zach Hidalgo aims to build on a solid sophomore performance. To strengthen their roster, the Builders have tapped into the transfer market, bringing in four players between 6'5" and 6'8" to enhance size at every position, with four of the five transfers coming from D2 programs. Additionally, keep an eye on freshman Jesse Ledbetter.



Mary (KS) stood out as one of the leading teams in the KCAC towards the end of last season, significantly improving their performance. They are excited to bring back key players, including Jordan Brown (HM All-Conference), Joey Schultz (HM All-Conference), Bryce Johnson, Tre Alexander, and Kaeden Bonner. Last year, they earned recognition as one of the top defensive teams in the KCAC and have now strengthened their rim protection with the addition of 6'11 Maduk Deng (Elgin CC). Furthermore, they are also welcoming Damare Smith (Cowley CC) to the roster.

## Sleeper Team



McPherson is excited to welcome back Colin Storr (KCAC Newcomer of the Year/2nd Team All-KCAC), Curtis Rose (Honorable Mention All-KCAC), along with two other players who each averaged close to 10 points per game. The team also adds three impressive JUCO transfers: Aaron Williams (NDSCS), a Mondak 2nd Team selection; Kai Evans (Iowa Lakes), an ICCAC 1st Teamer; and Terrance Austin (Murray State OK), an Honorable Mention Region 2 choice. Additionally, freshman Dallas Metzger shows great promise. With these new additions, McPherson is poised to be a formidable contender this season!

## KCAC Predictions: Two Auto-Bid League

Regular Season Champ



2ND AUTO-BID PREDICTION



National Tourney Qualifiers





# WEST ARC



## PRESEASON TOP 10

1. COLLEGE OF IDAHO
2. ARIZONA CHRISTIAN
3. THE MASTER'S (CA)
4. MONTANA TECH
5. OREGON TECH
6. LEWIS-CLARK STATE
7. HOPE INTERNATIONAL
8. MONTANA WESTERN
9. ROCKY MOUNTAIN (MT)
10. SOUTHERN OREGON





# CALPAC

California Pacific Conference

# PREVIEW

THE CALPAC IS A SIX TEAM LEAGUE THAT FEATURES TEAMS FROM CALIFORNIA. NOT SURE THAT ANY LEAGUE HAS CHANGED AS MUCH AS THE CALPAC HAS HEADED INTO 2024-25.

## Favorite



UC MERCED WILL BE HEADING NCAA D2 AFTER THIS SEASON, BUT WITH CALPAC POWERS uac and usk leaving the league it has opened the door for them to possibly go out with a calpac title and possibly a trip to the national tournament. they return 5 of their top 6 players including 1st team all calpac, cameron brown. UC MERCED IS VERY STINGY DEFENSVELY.

## Other Contenders



With only six teams in the league, technically, they are all contenders, right?! I would be surprised if the champion didn't emerge from one of these four teams. However, Westcliff finished second in the CalPac regular season last year. They did lose some of their top players, but Jerrred Cook has done an excellent job with that program. They should be competitive until the very end.

## League Updates

OUT



OUT



OUT



BENU-MESA EMBRY-RIDDLE (AZ) PARK-GILBERT

OUT



OUT



SAINT-KATHERINE ANTELOPE VALLEY

2023-24 Regular Season  
Champion



Champion of the 2023-24  
Tournament



2023-24 National  
Tournament Qualifiers



Deepest Tournament Run  
since merger

Round of 32 (2023)



last national title winner



PREVIEW

# CCC Preview

The Cascade Collegiate Conference is a 12 team conference that consists of teams from Idaho, Oregon and Washington

The Cascade remains one of the premier leagues in the nation. Unlike other National power leagues, the Cascade is notably top-heavy, yet the top 3-4 teams have proven capable of defeating some of the strongest teams in the NAIA. Last season, three teams from the Cascade qualified for the National Tournament, with College of Idaho and Lewis-Clark State making it to Kansas City. LCSC narrowly lost to Evangel, while College of Idaho reached the Fab Four before concluding their season.

We believe this season will once again be a three-way competition among College of Idaho, Oregon Tech, and Lewis-Clark State. College of Idaho and Oregon Tech return most of last year's roster, while LCSC has lost two players to Division 1 and one to Division 2.

Beyond this trio, the field is quite open. Keep an eye on Eastern Oregon and Southern Oregon as they look to keep pace with the leading teams!

2023-24 Regular Season  
Champion



2023-24 Tournament  
Champion



2023-24 National  
Tournament Qualifiers



Deepest Tournament Run  
since merger

2023 national champs





## Favorite



The 2023 National Champions made another deep run, but fell just short of being the first repeat champ since 2006-2007. Losing Jake O'Neil certainly hurts as he brought toughness and a certain level of confidence and calmness when the team needed it most and to be honest, the Yotes just seem to cycle guys through the program each year like Head Coach Colby Blaine has a full tree of players growing outside the gym and each year he just goes and grabs the next one to replace the one leaving. It also helps to return All-Americans like Samaje Morgan and Drew Wyman and then filter in the Johnny Radford's, Straton Rogers, Tyler Robinett's, Alex Germer's and even the sharp shooter Dougie Peoples. This year, the guy Coach is pulling off the tree is actually Samaje Morgan's nephew (that is not a typo), Ultrillo Morris. Ultrillo is another small guard, like his Uncle, but speed kills, and he can fly up and down the court.

## Other Contenders



Oregon Tech won the Cascade Conference Tournament last season and then headed out to Iowa for an opening round matchup against a tough Keiser team that they were able to win in OT. Unfortunately, that set up a true road game for a chance to head to Kansas City and while they gave it all they had, they ended up losing by 1pt to end their season. We LOVE the Owls though and the trio of Jamison Guerra, Keegan Shivers and Kain Osborn put a lot of pressure on opposing defenses. Then once you have them stopped, the Owls continue to have other players step up. That is what good teams do, and the Owls are a really good one. Keep an eye on Sophomore Jackson Cooper this year. He put up good numbers in limited action last year and looks primed for a break out season! There is no guarantees in the season, but a lot for Owl fans to be excited about that is for sure!



Lewis-Clark State is coming off another really good season where they finished 2nd in the Cascade and then went on the Round of 16. They did have two players leave for D1, but Coach Austin Johnson was able to keep Alton Hamilton (CCC Fr of the Yr), who could end up being one of the better bigs in the country! John Lustig and Gordon Boykins also return and could see bigger roles. When you have an elite big fella who is so efficient around the rim, one of the best things you can do is get elite shooters/perimeter scorers around the Warriors did that in two transfers, Taden King (UN-Kearney) and Kasen Carpenter (CSI). This is a Young Warrior team with just 1 senior and they are expecting big things from a couple of Freshman, Dylan Skaike and Kellen Jedicka (Alaska Gatorade POY)

## Sleeper Team



Eastern Oregon is just two years removed from finishing second in the Cascade. Last year didn't go the way they wanted, but leading scorer. Garrett Hawkes is back and a year older now and I just think Chris Kemp is a guy who, after a down year last season, will rally the troops and get them back competing this year!

## CCC Predictions

Regular Season Champ

Tournament Champ

National Tourney Qualifiers





N

M



FRONTIER  
CONFERENCE

PREVIEW

# Frontier Preview

The Frontier Conference is a six team League that features teams from Montana.

The Frontier Conference will be adding teams next season, so this is the final season of one of the more unique setups in the country. The gauntlet of playing everyone in the league THREE times in the regular season. The past few years it's been almost ALL Montana Tech and Carroll with Tech taking home the past three FC regular and tournament Titles. The Diggers look to be the favorites once again heading into this season.

The interesting part here will be here is the rest of the league. Carroll had a bit of a late coaching change, for second straight season they will have a new coach. Rocky had some BIG wins early last year, but they just couldn't maintain it all year long. They will have a shot I think though. Montana Western is the one to watch here, I think. Coach Jensen returns a good group from last year and they look like they are ready to make that next jump!

2023-24 Regular Season  
Champion



2023-24 Tournament Winner



2023-24 National  
Tournament Qualifiers



Deepest Tournament Run  
since merger

Quarterfinals (2021) Quarterfinals (2023)



last national title winner

2009



## What's New?

### Coaches



Dan Pearson



FRONTIER  
CONFERENCE





## Favorite



It's crazy to think that just 4 years ago, Tech had never won a Frontier Conf title... Now they haven't lost once since. Coach Hiatt continues to build, reload and build some more. The Diggers return five guys with major experience, led by 1st team All-FC selection, Michael Ure. They are also bringing in four transfers, three of which have some really nice size and ability. The last one? How about 6'3 SHARPSHOOTER, Brayden Koch. Who, transferred from Carroll and due to league rules and to sit out and RS last seasons expected this is a team that can mae a deep run at KC!

## Other Contenders



The Bulldogs were pretty young last year and it mostly showed. They only lose one player off last year's team though, while returning Jalyn Stepney and Abi Adedo who were both 2nd Team All-FC. Quincy Taylor, FC 6th man of the Year, is also part of that returning class. They add in Kyle Gruler (Portland CC) and Alan Kane (CSI) and then Billy Carlson is a Freshman who redshirted for them last year. Pieces are in play, now we will see if they are ready to take that next step.



Jesse Owens returns for the Bears as will AJ Wilson. Which is a good thing when you can build around good guard play. Coach Dreikosen is bringing in six transfers to add to those two and there is a common thread as you look at all of them. Almost all come from winning programs and all of them can score it or were named to their leagues All-defensive team. The Bears have good talent once again. AND truth be told, it's still a pretty wide-open league behind Montana Tech.

---

## FC predictions

Tournament Champion

National Tourney Qualifiers





**GSAC**

**PREVIEW**

# GSAC Preview

The GREAT SOUTHWEST Athletic Conference is an 8-team conference that consists of teams from Arizona and California.

What was the Golden State Athletic Conference is now the Great Southwest Athletic Conference as we see a bit of a mass exodus of teams out west head to NCAA D2. Eventually the I assume the CalPac and the GSAC will fully be one league, but for now it's BenU-Mesa, Embry-Riddle and Park-Gilbert who all leave the CalPac to join the new look GSAC.

Arizona Christian and The Master's will be the favorites to win the GSAC this year. With HIU also in the mix. ACU and TMU both have teams built for another deep KC run! Excited to see both play in some of these early tough matchups!

From there, it's a lot of question marks. Interested to see a new look OUAZ squad with Coach Ojanen. Also interested to see how the new guys adjust. Can they step right in and compete, do they need an adjustment year? Just going to be a lot to watch for in the GSAC this season.

## What is New?

IN	IN	IN	OUT	OUT
				
BENU-MESA	EMBRY-RIDDLE (AZ)	PARK-GILBERT	JESSUP	MENLO

Coaches



Tyler Ojanen

Logo, Name



2023-24 Regular Season Champion



2023-24 Tournament Champion



2023-24 National Tournament Qualifiers



Deepest Tournament Run Since Merger

Fab Four 2022 Fab Four 2023



Last National Title Winner

2009



## Favorite



Arizona Christian, off of a 25-8 season and a trip to the Round of 16, brings back All-American Trent Hudgens, and pairs him with veterans Anthony Howell and Dominic Gonzalez. They also bring back Lorenzo Wright who shot 40% from 3 last season and had a couple games where he went absolutely bonkers. Arik Nicholas, who was a 4x All-CalPac player at Antelope Valley, joins the team and should add another offensive weapon to the mix. As will Ese Onakporika (Peninsula College), Taevon Pierre-Louis (Mancock CC) Jonathan Dillon (Columbia College) and Amachi Chuwu (D2 Midwestern ST). If that wasn't enough to convince you that ACU is a Preseason Top 5 team, then can we interest you in one of the best Freshman in the country in 6'6 Jalik Dunkley-Distant? ACU is deep, athletic and SHOULD be able to put the ball in the basket.

## Other contenders



There is a scenario here, in which, if The Mustang's had returned everyone from last season that could have returned, that they may have had an argument to be the preseason number one team in the country. Unfortunately, Ty Harper (D1 Louisiana) and Kamrin Oriol (D1 North Florida) both left. They do return 2x GSAC POY, Kaleb Lowery though. We haven't, since merger, had a NPOY who wasn't a 4yr NAIA player yet, so think you have to have him on the short list to start season. I love watching Kelvin Starr's teams play and I really thought if they got past FHU last year, they may have won a National Title. We will see if they can dal up the magic once again!



Bill Czech is coming off a GSAC Coach of the Year last season. Sebastian Castro (2022 All-GSAC) and Grant Sii return for HIU. Castro coming off of an injury shortened season in 2024. Sii was second in scoring for HIU last season at 13.1ppg. Hope will also turn to four transfers including Miles Ceballos (Cerritos College) who was MVP of the SCC South and NABC All-American, Hopkins (Mt SAC) who was MVP of the SCC North, Allen Wright (Cypress College) and CJ Fisher (Mt SAC). HIU will be in the mix.

## Sleeper Team



We will give one of the newbies some love as BenU-Mesa is coming off of a 18-11 last season. They return three of their better players including Deven Franks (2nd Team All-CalPac), Damian Zivak who made 52 3's last season and Tanner Crawford who led the Cal Pac in blocked shots. Coach Frank Woodford also brings in some fire power in the transfer market with Benjamin Ramirez (La Sierra - 1st Team All-CalPac) who can fill it up! There is a lot to lean on when you need to get things correcte and that is a good thing. Especially when joining a new league. Does that all translate to wins? Those are the answers we will find out soon!

## GSAC Predictions

Tournament Champ



National Tourney Qualifiers



# GREAT LAKES / SOUTH ARC

## PRESEASON TOP 10



CROSSROADS  
LEAGUE



1. GEORGETOWN (KY)
2. INDIANA WESLEYAN
3. FREED-HARDEMAN (TN)
4. GRACE (IN)
5. CUMBERLANDS (KY)
6. MADONNA (MI)
7. INDIANA TECH
8. SAINT MARY OF THE WOODS (IN)
9. CORNERSTONE (MI)
10. IU KOKOMO





# CROSSROADS LEAGUE

# PREVIEW

# CL Preview

The Crossroads League is a 12-team conference that consists of teams from Indiana and Ohio.

For those who are reading this and don't know much about the NAIA, This ARC is loaded when you talk about the four leagues in it. The Great Lakes/South ARC is the only ARC that has put teams into the Fab Four all four seasons. It has resulted in 2 National Titles (Both from Mid-South), 1 runner-up (WHAC) and 2 lost in semis (Crossroads).

I know this is the Crossroads Preview but thought that was an important add. The Crossroads League has a lot of turnover from last year, but it's crazy how GOOD it is still going to be.

Grace and Indiana Wesleyan look to still be the favorites in our eyes. However, Huntington and Spring Arbor should be nipping at the heels as well. It's going to be a deep league once again. Marian, Bethel (IN) and St. Francis (IN) all have talent but have holes to fill from last year as well.

I still think as a whole, the Crossroads is going to be VERY good, but with a lot of "new" going on in the league this year it may take a little bit longer for things to shake out than normal.

## What is New?

### Coaches



Pat Knight



Austin Peters

2023-24 Regular Season Champion



Champion of the 2023-24 Tournament



2023-24 National Tournament Qualifiers



Deepest Tournament Run since merger

Fab Four (2021)

Fab Four (2024)



Last National Title Winner

2019





## Favorite



If I was a betting man, IWU will end up being picked 1st in the CL Coaches poll. Especially if Luke Brown is officially healthy, this is a Top 5 team in the country. Griffin Kliever, Caedmon Bontrager DJ Moore all return for IWU. They also add a really nice D1 transfer in Deeluan Pruitt (Jacksonville U) and Bright Kari who red shirted at Antelope Valley last year. Indiana Wesleyan may have lost Javan Buchanan, but they may be better than they were last season!



I think it is easy to focus on who someone lost and put too much focus on that. The Lancers lost a TON there is no hiding that. Elijah Malone made things a lot of things look easy. However, I think that Grace has a lot of guys who are ready to step up into bigger roles this year. We are big Ian Scott fans. He is different than Elijah, but when his motor is going, he is one of best players in country. The youngsters, Gage Sefton and Ian Raasch I think will do big things in extended minutes this year too. Grace also has a D1 transfer, Justin Degraaf, who played 10mpg for a 21-12 UC San Diego team. Finally, the Lancers have a really good Freshman class. Pair all that up with the role guys/shot makers in Graber/Stoltzfus/Sickafoose who have all also won a lot of games as Lancers and this is still a really god team.

## Other Contenders



Lane Sparks returns for the Foresters and will have a shot at CL POY. Landen Jordan and Jackson Paul also return. Coach Alford was also able to snag Maximus Gizzi (2nd-Team CL) away from Marian during the coaching transition. Kaden Johnson, who was HM All-CL at Goshen and Khammani Smith (Rio Grande) are also transferring in. With the Foresters returning 4 of 5 starters and adding some really nice pieces, they will once again be competing atop the Crossroads Standings.



Spring Arbor is the last Crossroads team to win a National Title. While no one from that team is here anymore, Coach Cottingham still is and he has slowly been building this thing back up. They are led by CL POY hopeful, Gabe Newhof and Travis Grayson, who was 2nd team All-CL. Kevyn Robertson and Dante Favor are key returners as well as the Cougars return their top 9 guys from a year ago. They will also get back Eli White, who sat out last year after tearing and ACL. SAU came on strong late in year last year, now it's a Question of if they can continue to take it to next level this year.

## Sleeper Team



Losing All-American Drew Lutz is a significant blow. However, Bethel retains six of their top eight players and will welcome back Al Peciulis, who was sidelined for 20 games last season due to injury. The Crossroads League is undeniably competitive, but with a solid group of returning players, if Bethel can have any of their transfers or freshmen step up into key roles, this team has the potential to make noise!

## CL Predictions

Regular Season Champ



Tournament Champ



National Tourney Qualifiers







PREVIEW

# MSC Preview

*The Mid-South Conference is a 7-team conference that consists of teams from Kentucky and Tennessee*

*The Mid-South won the race to 1, as then Mid-South member, Shawnee State, took home the 1st NAIA title as 1 Division. Then last year, The Mid-South also won the race to 2, as Freed-Hardeman gave the conference it's second National title in the past four seasons.*

*The Mid-South has ALWAYS been one of dominance. However, it's also a league that lies in the middle of so many other leagues. So, teams have bolted to other leagues to try to help with budget and travel costs, leaving the MSC with seven teams. Fear not, though, as we saw on the men's side last year, this is still one of the premier leagues in the country!*

*You can expect that to be the same this season as Georgetown, Freed-Hardeman and Cumberlands are loaded once again, and the rest of the league should be back to where they are used be as well. Seemed to be a lot of injuries last year in the league. Campbellsville lost five guys for the season, Lindsey-Wilson had injuries all 1st semester and there are more up and down the league, that are now back and hopefully can stay healthy this year. Think this will be a much more competitive league 1-7 this year and if all falls right, it's not out of line to think that 5 teams can make the NAIA tournament!*

*2023-24 Regular Season  
Champion*



*2023-24 Tournament  
Champion*



*2023-24 National  
Tournament Qualifiers*



*Last National Title Winner*

**2024**





## Favorite



Georgetown returns Jabrion Spikes, Tae Dozier and . Transfers, Ajani Blyden (Southeastern CC), Andres Burney (D1 Jacksonville), Darien Lewis (Olney Central) and Jaquias Franklin (Lenoir Rhyne) are a big-time class. Frankling can really score the ball. Burney has potential to be one of best Forwards in country and Lewis is the prototype G'Town Point Guards that coach Briggs loves. Sure, this team will need some seasoning, as they figure things out. But this is a really talented Tiger squad!

## Other Contenders



The Defending National Champs lose All-Americans Quan Lax and JJ Wheat, 3yr starter Hunter Scurlock and Devin Tomlinson. The Lions though, are a program built off of depth and they certainly will have the "Next man up" mentality for most of the holes to fill. Sharp Shooters (maybe future coach) Riley McClaran and Sam Powell, who basically threw himself a coming out party in KC last year, both return. Peyton Law who basically laced with one hand could step into bigger role this year now that he is healthy too, All-MS-C performer Gerald Lane came off but had some big games for Lions. He's one to circle for sure. As is transfer and former Cumberlands All-American, Jordan Stephens. Southeastern (FL) transfer, Makai Vassell, will also help lighten that scoring load lost from last season ago. Most importantly, Stephens and Vassell gives the Lions size and length at the G/W positions which, with how Coach Stuttts wants to defend, is scary for opponents! Lions have a tough schedule, but they are a team that we like a lot!



Five returners from a 28-5 squad a year ago led by 1st team All-MS-C selection Anthony Johnson. UC does have to find a way to replace Jonathan Brown and JJ Ramey, who were two of their top three scorers, but this was a Patriots team that was really balanced in scoring and with starters DJ Jones, Robertas Jonaitis and Matt Cromer all back to join Anthony Johnson they have the experience needed to compete. Transfers Anthony Harris (Otero) and Brant Smithers (WVU Tech) will both be nice pieces as well. Cumberlands could also see some minutes from Freshen Jeremiah Godfrey and Kyler McLendon. Overall, this is a talented and well coached Patriot team that will look to win another MS-C Title.



Campbellsville returns 8 players, five of which had season ending injuries last year. Leading scorer Kam Vick returns this season and will be a part of their late season run. Kam led them in scoring until his injury last season. Cobe Perry, after getting his basketball legs back under him last year could be ready for a breakout year this year, and Jay Milburn is a returning starter. The Tigers are also bringing in three impact transfers in Marcellus Vail (D1 Samford), Ra Briggs (South Arkansas CC) and James Jewell (Panola JC). The added depth and athleticism and uptick in talent will all help the Tigers stay competitive this season.

## Sleeper



Bryce Brown is gone, but 1st teamer and MS-C Freshman of the Year, Kenyata Carbon returns for LWC. The Blue Raiders also return starter Connor Robinson. Matt Khoury who led the MS-C in 3pt %, Jhrdon Mumford who unfortunately battled injuries all year, and Barrett Burchyett. They also will return Olson Nicholson, who sat out last year with injury. LWC brings in transfers Daivel Jackson (Keystone College), Julian Cunningham (Niagara CC), DJ Gordon (Bloomsburg), and Jermain Baxter (College of the Desert). Freshman Ethan Cooper and Thon Bill Pach also look to provide an impact for the Blue Raiders. While they were 0-4 against FHU and UC, they swept Georgetown last season. Need to be more consistent if going to be real contenders this year.

## MS-C predictions

Auto-bid Prediction

National Tourney Qualifiers





# PREVIEW

# RSC Preview

The River States Conference is a 12-team conference that consists of teams from Indiana, Ohio, Virginia and West Virginia!

The River States Conference was a lot of fun once again last season and in the end it was the team who was picked last, St Mary of the Woods, who ended up with the RSC Regular Season Title! It would be Point Park though, in their final season in the NAIA, who would lock up the RSC Tournament Title.

Point Park leaving for D2 takes away a top tier team from the league, but that doesn't mean that there aren't some very good teams left still. SMWC, Kokomo, Shawnee State WVU Tech are teams who can all be tourney worthy this season with the right path.

2023-24 Regular Season Champion



2023-24 Tournament Champion



2023-24 National Tournament Qualifiers



Deepest Tournament Run since merger

Round Of 16 (2022)



Last National Title Winner

## What is New?

IN



IU Columbus

OUT



Point Park

OUT



Ohio Christian

## Coaches



Matt Karn



## Favorite



Coach Jesse McClung led SMWC to the RSC title last season, despite being predicted to finish at the bottom. Replacing last season's RSC Player of the Year, Cobie Barnes, will be a challenging task. However, SMWC boasts strong depth with Shon Tupuola (2nd Team All-RSC) and Greg Jenkins (3rd Team All-RSC) returning, along with new transfers Taeron Hogg (Brescia), who was also a 2nd Team All-RSC selection, Karson Jenkins (Goshen), and Caleb Iheukwu (Edison State CC). Freshman Taray Howell is also anticipated to make a significant impact. I believe this is a Pomeroy team that has the potential to repeat.

## Other contenders



The Cougars return Max Newman, Noah Harris and Joseph Annan. That is 6'8, 6'6, 6'6 all returning and all who averaged in double figures last year. The Cougars will add in Kedric Anderson (Morton) and Drake Moore (Oakland City). Freshman Chris Glover and Mason Lewis will also see time. This is an IUK team that has consistently finished at or near the top of the RSC standings and that shouldn't change this season.



Shawnee State returns Tre Beard (3rd Team All-RSC). Around Tre, the Bears are hoping transfers Markell Hood (Grandview) Donovan Lovelace (Texas Wesleyan), Marcos Vazquez (Cuyahoga CC). 6'7 Freshman wing Preston Saia is also a welcomed addition to this year's team. Even with the talent that was lost, this is still a very talented Bears team heading into the year.



Andrew Work is gone, so leading scorer, Braden Chapman will now be gracing the WVU #1 jersey. The Sophomore had a big year last year on his way to 1st team All-RSC honors. Thomas Hailey is the only other starter back for Tech. Sincere Edwards (Cerro Coso CC), Zy McLean (UNC Pembroke) and Jonathan Moore Jr (Rio Grande) all transfer in to add a little experience and depth to this team.

## Sleeper Team



Are they really a sleeper if they are 4th in your RSC ratings? Some of this is trying to predict the actual RSC preseason poll. Trey Robertson (2nd team All-RSC) returns. From there HC Ryan Arrowood put an emphasis on starting experience in the transfer portal and succeeded. Milan Square started 57 games in his career at D2 Walsh, Eric Butler was a 2yr starter at D2 Elizabeth City St., Jaelin Johnson 2yr starter at D2 Glenville State. Keylane Lasisi (Otero CC) and Jalin Fox (Kalamazoo Valley CC) are JUCO guys will have impacts this season as well. Freshmen Bransyn Copas and Cyan Ervin will also look to jump into the rotation this season as well. Copas is the son of Nathan Copas, who was the last Rio 1st team All-American and part of the Rio 2001 Fab Four team. This has a chance to be a dangerous team come March if they can figure it all out!

## RSC predictions

Regular Season Champ

2nd Auto-Bid Prediction

National Tourney Qualifiers





# WHAAC

WOLVERINE-HOOSIER ATHLETIC CONFERENCE

# PREVIEW

# WHAC Preview

The Wolverine-Hoosier Athletic Conference is a 13-team conference that consists of teams from Indiana, Michigan, Ohio,

The WHAC may have as many GOOD returners as any league in the country. It's going to really make for another really fun year inside the WHAC.

The defending champs, Madonna, fresh off of a trip to the Round of 16 are the early favorites. However, Indiana Tech and Cornerstone will be nipping at their heels once again as both teams have the fire power to win the WHAC this season. As we have mentioned in previous leagues in the Great Lakes/South ARC, it truly is a very deep ARC...and the WHAC is going to only add to that this season.

Outside the three immediate contenders of Madonna, Indiana Tech and Cornerstone, look for Rochester to be in contention as well. Even if it's not fully for a WHAC title, this is a team that is good enough for a National Tourney bid if they can't secure an auto-bid.

Lourdes, with new Interim Head Coach, Jake Dupree, has been the assistant for the Gray Wolves under Dennis Hopson and they have had a lot of success together in the WHAC. He's got some talent in Shaunn Monroe and company as well. Wouldn't close the door on them quite yet!  
Lots to be excited about in the WHAC!

## What is New?

### Coaches



Jake Dupree (Interim)

2023-24 Regular Season  
Champion



2023-24 Tournament  
Champion



2023-24 National  
Tournament Qualifiers



Deepest Tournament Run  
since merger

National Runner-Up (2022)



Last National Title Winner

2015







## Favorite



Madonna returns 10 players from last year's team that reached the Round of 1 including 1st teamers Brendan Young and Isaac Anderson and 2nd teamer Matthew MacLellan. They are adding in a very intriguing piece Nikola Sašaroga out of Lyon and another nice Forward in Satchel Love out of King. Freshmen Kyle Havens and Isaac Smith are guys the coaches really like as well. This is a deeper Crusaders team from a year ago that won the WHAC Title. It's also bigger, and more athletic.

## Other Contenders



Indiana Tech, despite losing Blake Davison 1-game into the season, and Nigel Martin in game 9, still went 16-6 in WHAC play. Davison and Martin are both back and join 1st team All-WHAC selection Brady Titus and 2nd teamers Javel Lewis and Max Perez. Lucas Lyyksi, Crew Gibson and Dallas Roberts all return as well. Gibson and Roberts were part of the WHAC Freshman Team. 6'10 Adam Walden (Odessa JC) gives this team an intriguing scoring force inside that defenses will need to adjust to. Add in Freshmen, Jaxson Fugate, Landen O'Brien and Caleb Lehman. This Tech team is DEEP! Expect this Warriors team to be hungry and ready to compete!



Cornerstone returns 13 of their top 14 players and 4 starters from last year's team that tied for second place in the WHAC standings. Luke Rowlinson (1st Team All-WHAC) and Eli Steffen (2nd Team All-WHAC) lead the group of returners. Cornerstone will also be turning to D3 All-league performer Tanner Wiegerek (Hope College) to help fill the void left by Cory Ainsworth. This is a team that can very much win the WHAC this season!



The Warriors return four of their top six players including three starters including Gunner Walters (1st Team All-WHAC), Brett White along with James Fisher were 2nd Team All-WHAC selections. The Warriors, like every one in the league seems to be, returns almost everyone! They also get the cool opportunity to, once again, to host crosstown D1 Oakland for an exhibition game, but the Warriors eyes will be set on a WHAC title and a bid to Nationals.

## Sleeper Team



Losing WHAC POY, Brandon Beavers, hurts LTU, no doubt about that. BUT the Blue Devils return five players from last year, including Andrew Rinn (1st Team All-WHAC), Cameron Mcevens and Aaron Dolny who all averaged double figures. They bring in Jimmy Salamone, the 2x All-RSC guard out of Ohio Christian as well as Bogdan Cret (Southwestern IA CC) and Pablo Avalos (Lackawanna College). The Blue Devils still are plenty competitive and hungry enough to ruffle some feathers this season. If they can do it consistently enough, they can find themselves inside that very important Top 4.

## WHAC Predictions: 2 Auto-Bid League

Regular Season Champ



2nd Auto-Bid Prediction



National Tourney Qualifiers



# SOUTHWEST ARC



# SAC



## PRESEASON TOP 10

1. LANGSTON (OK)
2. LSU-SHREVEPORT
3. LSU-ALEXANDRIA
4. NELSON U (OK)
5. MACU (OK)
6. XAVIER (LA)
7. WAYLAND BAPTIST (TX)
8. JOHN BROWN (AR)
9. UNIVERSITY OF THE SOUTHWEST
10. TEXAS WESLEYAN





**CONTINENTAL**  
 ATHLETIC CONFERENCE

**PREVIEW**

# CAC Preview

The Continental Athletic Conference is a 10- team conference that consists of teams from all across the country as it's the "independent" league.

With the CAC still being the independent league they don't have a traditional regular season schedule. Teams will meet for some weekend classics against one another but for the most part, their schedules are their own to make.

This is a league that's auto-bids have been owned by Florida College and Washington Adventist over the past few years. BUT, it's also a league who takes the two teams that reach the CAC Tourney title game, so don't count out Florida National, Fisher, Haskell and Northern New Mexico who all have shown to be able to compete in past! Then you have the newcomer, Spartanburg Methodist. Who lost a lot, but was a really good JUCO program before making transition to NAIA.

2023-24 Tournament Champion



2023-24 National Tournament Qualifiers



Deepest Tournament Run since merger

Round of 32 (2022)



Last National Title Winner

## What is New?



Voorhees



Crowley's Ridge



College of the Ozarks



Wilberforce

## Coaches



Matt Karn



## Favorite



WV returns Isaiah Anderson, Emanuel Hylton and Christian Magruder (Coming off of Medical RS). They add a trio of transfers in Chase Cooke (D2 Miles), Jalen Anderson (Fisher) and Felix McGhee (Oakwood), WV also brings in three Freshman with some good size in Julian King, Niels Rohder and Nehemiah Stein. This is a team that has been two CAC title games in three seasons. They have even given teams fits in the NAIA National Tourney. They have the talent and depth to do the same this year!

## Other contenders



Florida College, under Chase Teichmann, dominated the CAC. However, Coach Teichmann was able to take the Georgia Gwinnett job, leaving assistant Jesse Repay as the interim Head Coach. He also took several players with him. Coach Repay will return 6'6 Stephon Martin. Most everyone else are transfers. Johnny Torrence (Spoon River), Isiah Shirley (Mt San Jac), Keegan Phillips (Clark College) all put up good JUCO numbers. With a bunch of new faces, there will be plenty of opportunities. Will be a fun team to watch early to see who develops into those go to pieces for FC.



I want to preface this by saying that while their website is improving, it's always been hard to get updated information at FNU, so if any of this is wrong, I apologize. With that, the only 1st team all-league selection returning back in the entire league is Jovan Debrito of FNU. Him along with Matthew Robinson allow FNU to have a fun 1-2 scoring punch that should help them compete come tourney time.

## Sleeper Team



Late coaching change here as Coach Blake Jackson comes over after being an assistant at Keiser to take over at SMC. Spartanburg had been a really good JUCO program prior to transitioning to 4yr college. We saw that transition go pretty smoothly for Lincoln in Illinois a few years back. The Pioneers are going to be really young, but interested to see if Coach Jackson can get them playing well early!

## CAC Predictions: 2 Auto-bid League

National Tourney Qualifiers





PREVIEW



# RRAC Preview

The Red River Athletic Conference is a 13-team conference that consists of teams from Louisiana, New Mexico and Texas.

How soon is too soon to declare a league is BACK? I am not saying the league hasn't been good or hasn't had good teams recently, but, on paper at least, we could end up seeing three teams inside the Top 25 over the course of the year and LSUS and LSUA have the look and feel of two Top 10 or Top 15 teams. There are going to be some absolute showdowns inside of the RRAC this season as LSUS and LSUA are absolutely LOADED with talent. XULA looks to be back to XULA where they are long, athletic and going to be one of best defensive teams in country. USW, after a RRAC Title appearance last season, has enough pieces to make things interesting as well.

Should be a lot of fun games all year long as even as we saw last year with Texas College, sometimes teams find their rhythm early in the season and never lose it!

## What is New?

IN



Texas A&M San Antonio

## Coaches



Chris Dial



John A. Smith



Walter Yates

2023-24 Regular Season  
Champion



Champion of the 2023-24  
Tournament



2023-24 National  
Tournament Qualifiers



Deepest Tournament Run  
since merger

Round of 16 (2022, 2023, 2024))



Last National Title Winner



## Favorite



LSU-Shreveport returns Tyler Washington (2x-All RRAC) AND Melvion Flannagan (All-RRAC) from last year. Coach Blank then went and got some DUDES to transfer in. Davion Coleman (St. Mary's/D1 Tx State) big time D2 scorer, Taj Anderson, who was one of best shooters in JUCO for Indian Hills, both Meikkel Murray and Tahjae Hill come over from Wayland Baptist after having All-SAC seasons and Hayden Brittingham is another guy who filled it up in one of the best JUCO leagues in the country.



It took some time, last season, for 1st yr HC Dimario Jackson and his Generals to find their way. But once they found their groove, they didn't look back. LSUA is just one of three programs who brings back a 1st team All-American. Kashie Natt was phenomenal for the Generals down the stretch as he helped bring home a RRAC title. While they do bring back RRAC Fr. of the Yr and 2nd team ALLRRAC member, Jason Perry and HM All-RRAC member, Elliot McQuillian we love that they are bringing back former NAIA All-American Jakemin Abney, after a year at Mississippi College. Natt and Abney make for a heck of a pairing. On top of that, you also bring back former RRAC Freshman of the Year, Jordan Decuir, who had left for LSUS.

## Other Contenders



Gone is TJ Jones, a three-time champion and the all-time wins leader in XULA history, making his replacement a significant challenge. However, Coach Alfred Williams and the XULA team still have returning players, including two-time second-team RRAC selection Lance Williams, along with J'Quan Ewing, Jathen Ross—who holds the school record for three-pointers—and Corey Dunning. They are also welcoming new talent: James Weathers from D1 TAMU-Commerce, Noah Ogili from Eastern AZ, Seviuhn Turner from Baton Rouge JC, Leon Smith from Southern Shreve, and Omarion Bodrick from D2 Livingston.



USW welcomes back Anthony Scott and Rahkiem Petterson, both of whom had standout seasons earning 1st and 2nd team honors. Additionally, James Evans and Caleb Wilson will return to the roster. The team ventured North and successfully recruited two players from the Heart of America, adding 2x All-Heart member Jacob Koontz (Grand View) and Jayvin Brown (William Penn) to their lineup. To bolster their size, Coach Voight and his staff have also brought in Olisa Ngonadi (Robert Morris) and Norrman Beckford (St. Mary's).

## Sleeper Team



Chris Dial was a thorn in the leagues side while he was the head coach at OLLU. This is just the 1st year of ever having a program for TAMU-San Antonio, so maybe this is a tad aggressive right out of the gates with five transfers and six Freshman. Not even saying "sleeper" in the sense of they can win the league, but more so they will compete each game!

## RRAC Predictions: 2 Auto-Bid League

Regular Season Champ



2nd Auto-Bid Prediction



National Tourney Qualifiers





M



W  
WAYLAND



★ OCU  
STARS



NELSON



# SAC

# PREVIEW

# SAC Preview

*The Sooner Athletic Conference is a 12-team conference that consists of teams from Oklahoma and Texas.*

*The Sooner Athletic Conference is another league that has had good past tradition and even has back-to-back titles as recently as 2016 and 2017. Speaking of tradition. College of the Ozarks, who used to host the D2 NAIA National Tournament, joins the SAC this season. They had rejoined the NAIA last season after a few years away.*

*The SAC tends to be a HEAVY transfer league. You will see in the previews on the next page, that it is the case once again this year. Most of the time the teams who can come together the fastest, learn the system the quickest and who can also stay the healthiest. I felt a lot of SAC teams had a lot of bad luck staying healthy last year.*

*Heading into this season, Langston has one of the most talented rosters you will see. I am not exaggerating. They legit have former 4star players, former D1 stars and yet their best player, may end up being a 6'9 JUCO player with 3yrs left! Behind them we really love Nelson, MACU, and Wayland! This is honestly one of those leagues we wish we could have had three more sheets, because John Brown should be in the mix as well Hopefully next year we can have a full breakdown on everyone in the country!*

## What is New?



College of the Ozarks

## Coaches



Brian Wanamaker



Landon Hughey

2023-24 Regular Season Champion



2023-24 Tournament Champion



2023-24 National Tournament Qualifiers



Deepest Tournament Run Since Merger

Runner-Up (2024)



Last National Title Winner

2017



# SAC

## Favorite



Langston HC Chris Wright has two national runner-up finishes in the past three seasons (Talladega and Langston). Last year the Lions were about 90 seconds away from winning the title. How does Coach Wright respond? By going out and signing the best recruit he's ever signed. Former Jamestown HC, Danny Neville as associate head coach. Don't get me wrong, this may be his best actual recruiting class as well with the likes of Joshua Smith and Mike Peake who may both be NPOY candidates, Jamison Epps, Bryce Monroe, Mario McKinney, Aaron-Lemmon Warren, Jarvis Brown, Daylon Andrews, Tim Ighefe. They certainly reloaded with a ton of D1 transfers. The question is always how well they come together, because this is the most talented roster in the NAIA.

## Other Contenders



Second Team All-American CJ Hall and Nelson University, previously known as SAGU, faced a tough opening round home loss to Baker last season. Knowing Coach Delfon Deal, he and his team have been eager to return to the court ever since. This program is accustomed to making significant tournament runs, and they aim to build on the previous season's performance. The Lions are set to return three starters, with Alerick Hall and JJ Boling joining CJ Hall. In total, eight letter winners are coming back, and they will add considerable size to the roster. Notable newcomers include 6'7 Micah Clark, a former Top 60 JUCO recruit, 6'7 Latrel Davis from Western Iowa Tech, 6'9 Jordan Jenkins from the University of the Ozarks, 6'4 Bryson Felder from Southern Wesleyan, and 6'5 Preston Lawrence, all of whom are expected to make an impact this season.



MACU welcomes back Magok Manyang, who was a member of the SAC All-Tournament team last year, along with Tarrence Gains and Quentin Woodson, both of whom have been part of the program for over four seasons. The Evangelists' transfer class is led by Josiah Fulcher, who earned a spot on the Freshman All-Conference team at Bowling Green and has recorded several double-digit scoring games throughout his career. He is a skilled and talented guard! Additionally, MACU is adding Juwan White and Shannon Strickland from Texas A&M International, Keeshawn Mason from Southern Nazarene, and two junior college players: Marquee Wilkerson from Eastern Oklahoma State and Morris Williams from Paris Junior College. Freshman Zander Baker also has the potential to make a significant impact on the team's success this season!



Quenton Coleman (HM ALL SAC) is back, joined by Brett Leach and Dylan McDougal, with hopes for a stronger season from Manny Crump, who dealt with injuries throughout the last season. At 6'8", this senior has the potential to excel if he stays healthy. Wayland has also actively engaged in the transfer portal, acquiring James Lee from WAU, Kabine Kaba (SAUK Valley), Alex Rojas (Coppin State), Nikolas Noumeros (D2 Francis Marion), Aahmod Scarbrough (NM Highlands), Kayvontay Williams (Pratt CC), and Adeola Seun (D1 SIUE). WBU has secured exceptional shooters in Noumeros, Rojas, and Scarbrough, allowing them to create lineups capable of shooting from anywhere on the court. This team has a chance to be a fun one to watch.

## Sleeper Team



I'm primarily sharing this because I'm uncertain about where they will rank in the SAC preseason polls due to a coaching change and their performance last year. However, I really appreciate the team that new head coach Brian Wanamaker has assembled. Richard Amaefule emerged strongly towards the end of the previous season. Montez Young is returning after playing only four games, and Augustin Kingombe is back after starting 20 games. Coach Wanamaker also brought in some solid transfers to address gaps in the lineup. Khalil Turner from Morgan State averaged 10 points and 5 rebounds in D1. Trey Sinegal is coming off an All-Conference season at Central Methodist, while Kris O'Neil played 19 minutes per game at UMSL. Additionally, Vegas Evans, a 6'8 guard from New Brunswick, averaged 11.5 points per game. With their size, length, athleticism, and I believe, the talent, they should be competitive in the SAC.

## SAC Predictions: 2 Auto-bid League

Regular Season Champ



2nd Auto-bid Prediction



National Tourney Qualifiers



# SOUTHEAST ARC



## PRESEASON TOP 10

1. AVE MARIA (FL)
2. FLORIDA MEMORIAL
3. KEISER (FL)
4. LIFE (GA)
5. LOYOLA (LA)
6. MOBILE (AL)
7. PIKEVILLE (KY)
8. ST. THOMAS (FL)
9. FAULKNER (AL)
10. PHILANDER SMITH (AR)





PREVIEW

# AAC Preview

The Appalachian Athletic Conference is a 12-team conference that consists of teams from Georgia, Kentucky, Tennessee, North Carolina, South Carolina and Virginia.

The AAC has seen it's fair share of changes over the past year. Coaching changes, player turnover and even welcoming a new new Men's team in the Columbia (SC) Koalas, who until this upcoming season, did not have a men's basketball program.

Even one of the most anchored programs in the AAC, the Union Bulldogs, who have won 10 of the past 11 AAC Titles, is all of a sudden on their 3rd coach in three seasons.

We will see if that last one opens the door for someone new to take over as a power in the AAC or maybe it helps grow the strength of the league over the next few years with multiple teams winning allowing more programs to use that in recruiting. We will see what the next few years looks like in the AAC. For 2024-25, the door is open! There are a few teams who can win the league, starting with

The Pikeville Bears. Coach Tigh Compton has done a good job of keeping a championship level team even through losing guys through graduation and transfer. Reinhardt, Johnson, Milligan and Union are all teams to keep an eye on to start the season!

2023-24 Regular Season  
Champion



2023-24 Tournament  
Champion



2023-24 National  
Tournament Qualifiers



Deepest Tournament Run  
Since Merger

Quarterfinals (2024)



Last National Title Winner

2017



## What is New?

IN



Columbia (SC)

## Coaches



Randy Casey

Jake Deer

Rodney Haddix



## Favorite



The Bears, in their first season in the AAC, came up one game short of knocking off AAC power, Union for a regular season AAC Title. This season, they enter as the favorites to win it. Pikeville returns Bradley Bunch (1st Team All-AAC), Keian Worrix and Keynan Cutlip. They are adding a good D2 Forward to the mix in Cade Looney (Emory & Henry) as well as three JUCO guys in LA Walker (Otero JC), David Robinson (Waubonsee CC), Tyler Best (Williston State CC). The Bears are also expecting big things out of Freshmen Jaylan Rigdon, Jace Copley and Zion Blevins.

## Other contenders



Nate Jones (1st Team All-AAC) and Brasen James (AAC All-Freshman team lead the charge back for the Eagles. 6'10 Jacob Radaker, who sat out all last year with an injury, is a former D1 player and if healthy can have big impact on the Eagles! Nekhi Fisher also returns and will step into a bigger role as well! The Eagles also will be turning to transfers Tee Williams (Valdosta State), Derrick Brown (Gordon St) Zae Wiggins (Ark Monticello), Quincy Young (Fort Valley St) and Shamir Wingfield (Albany Tech) to add some size, length and depth to the roster!



Johnson finished fourth last season in the AAC and returns almost everyone from last season including 1st Team All-AAC selection Toris Woods and AAC Fr of the Year, Dallas Carbaugh. They add some size in D3 grad transfer, Ben Rice (Connecticut College). The Royals will look to take another step up in the AAC this season as Coach Logan Sharp continues to grow the Royal program!

## Sleeper Team



Milligan loses the AAC POY Follie Bogan, but Coach Bill Robinson was able to go out and get some transfers to add to the mix that makes the Buffs a very deep and talented roster. If they can get everything figured out with this group, they can certainly surprise a lot of people. Especially in a year like this year when the door is wide open just waiting for someone in the league to open it!

## AAC Predictions: 2 Auto-bid League

Regular Season Champ



2nd Auto-bid Prediction



National Tourney Qualifiers





# PREVIEW





# HBCUAC Preview



## RIP Mark Mitchell

I mentioned last March that Wilberforce Head Coach Mark Mitchell had passed away suddenly and just wanted to one last time give our condolences to his family and to the Wilberforce players and staff.

The former GCAC has now transitioned into the HBCU Athletic Conference. The league has successfully recruited new teams, and it promises to be quite competitive, particularly among the top four to five teams. Last season, the competition primarily revolved around three teams: Philander Smith, Tougaloo, and Talladega. To be honest, I thought Talladega was moving up to D2, so I'll need to look into that further.

As we approach this season, I'm pleased to see Todd Day Jr. stepping in for his father at Philander. For those unfamiliar, this is a surprisingly strong team that put up a tough fight against Cumberlands (KY) in last year's opening round. They are likely to be the early favorites. Additionally, Tougaloo, Talladega, and Dillard, especially with the addition of Jamal Gibson, should also contend for a HBCUAC Title.

## What is New?



IN  Stillman (AL)


IN  Voorhees

Brand, Logo, Name



## Coaches

   
Todd Day Jr.

  
John Mill

   
Kevin Sheppard - Interim

2023-24 Regular Season Champion



2023-24 Tournament Champion



2023-24 National Tournament Qualifiers




Deepest Tournament Run since merger

Quarterfinals (2023)



Last National Title Winner

2009



## Favorite



Philander won the then GCAC title last season and return nearly everyone from last year's team. Led by Raymond Reece (1st Team All- GCAC/All-Defensive Team) and Ambrey Womack. Philander did have a coaching change this summer as Todd Day Sr. stepped down and Todd Day Jr. is taking over the helm.

## Other contenders



Tougaloo has always competed for GCAC titles, and you expect them to continue that tradition in the HBCUAC as well. Antonio Patterson and company are hungry and ready to go for 2024-25 and Head Coach Earl Sanders has shown he's one of the best in the NAIA. The Bulldogs made a deep run to Kansas City two years ago and are built to get back.



Again, I am a bit shocked to see them here. I honestly thought they were making the jump to D2 this year, so I need to see what happened with that move. However, Dega had a good year last year, falling just short late in the year as they scrambled last to play a lot of games in a short period of time. Dega should be good once again this season though and since they, seemingly are still trying to transition to D2. Will be an interesting team to follow all season long!



Dillard has a lot of talent on their roster as they return two All-league performers in Tory Cargo and Justin Warren. They also get Armond Williams and Devin Williams back and then turn to the transfer portal to add Khalif Allim (Houston Tillotson), Bentravin Phillips (LSPA CC), Shane Davis (Jones CC), Ben Fort (NDSCS) and Eli Burke (Hocking College).

## Sleeper Team



My notes show that Jamal Gibson, last years Player of the Year, transferred to Dillard, but as I type this I see if he is listed on the SUNO note. Which is great news for SUNO! Him and Tyon Thompson together make SUNO very competitive! As goof of a 1-2 punch as there is in the league. On nights, when teams are able to stop one or both of them, it comes down to who steps up? If they can find a consistent answer to that, SUNO will be a factor at the end of the season!

## HBCU Predictions

Regular Season Champ

2nd Auto-bid Prediction

National Tourney Qualifiers





**SOUTHERN STATES**  
*Athletic Conference*



**PREVIEW**



# SSAC Preview

The Southern States Athletic Conference is a 12-team conference that consists of teams from Alabama, Georgia, Louisiana, Mississippi and Tennessee.

The SSAC continues to grow each year and it has done so again this year with the addition of new NAIA program, Abraham Baldwin Agricultural College. The move has the league moving to EAST/WEST standings this season.

The SSAC is always deep and usually a little crazy! Think we should see more of that this year with five to six teams pushing for a title.

Life, Mobile, Loyola, Faulkner, William Carey, Dalton State, Thomas, UT Southern. I mean call your shot I guess. I do think Life and Loyola look like the favorites on paper early on. I like both teams a lot.

Faulkner and Mobile are very closely chomping at the heels in the group behind them. As we said earlier, there really is a handful of teams here that we won't be shocked, if at the end of the season, they are fighting for a SSAC Title. There are just a lot of boxes to be checked along the way! Buckle your seat belt, because no such things as smooth rides in the SSAC.

## What is New?

IN



ABAC

OUT



Stillman (AL)

## Coaches



Andy Sharpe



Calvin Sinkfield

2023-24 Regular Season  
Champion



2023-24 Tournament  
Champion



2023-24 National  
Tournament Qualifiers



Last National Title Winner

2021



## Favorite



Elias Ramirez (2nd Team All-SSAC) leads a trio of returners back that includes Dara Olonade and Srdjan Popovic. Coach Easley really dove into the transfer portal though and brings in Chaze Harris (1st Team All-RSC) and Tyreke Johnson (3rd Team All-RSC) both out of Shawnee State. They also signed Cortez Johnson who was an All-WJAC player at Clarendon CC. Signed with D1 Nichols State before signing at Life. Matija Gledic (Az Western) is also transferring in. Finally, Phat Cleveland (Florida College) who was actually at Life this past season recovering from injury is finally back healthy and ready to play. Coach Easley's team was left at home when the bracket was revealed last year. He sure hit the recruiting trail like he didn't want to be left at home again this year. On paper, it's a really good team. We will see if they are able to get it all put together!

## Other contenders



Loyola returns all five starters and fifteen total players from last year's team that that became the first SSAC team to win 3 games in 3 days to win the SSAC Title! It was a young team, who matured fast! Led by Milan Mejia (2nd Team All-SSAC), Zachary Lee (SSAC MVP), Braelee Albert (SSAC All Tournament) and Alex Hammond. They are bringing in Schuyler Pimentel (New College of FL) to add a scoring punch to the mix as well. Freshman, Kosta Bjelicic and Jaylen Peters could be factors this season as well. Loyola is going to be battle tested early and often! They have one of the toughest schedules in the country! They have a chance to certainly make some early noise!



Player of the Year and 2nd Team All-American, Ezra McKenna is back for Mobile. Love to see it for the Rams as Ezra it's been fun watching Ezra grow up through the program. Trent Moye and Trey Smith also return. Coach Archie is bringing in BJ Comer (D1 Cal State Northridge), Adarius Oliver (MGA), and Colin Howell (Pensacola St CC). They also have Zion Hunter and Kaiden Francis, two talented Freshmen adding into the mix. Love that this team has good shooters around Ezra now. That should only help everyone as if shots are falling it's going to put a lot of pressure on opposing coaches on how to guard these guys! If they can get consistent guard play after losing Josh Williams and Pooh Frazier. And someone can fill the shoes of Damariee Jones, the Rams can compete for a SSAC Title!



Has there been anyone in the country that keeps turning out Freshman of the Year winners, who then go on to D1's, more than Faulkner? Maybe a little fabrication there, but sure feels like they consistently find good Freshmen! The Eagles are coming off a bit of a down season but have a lot of good talent on this year's roster as they return Jonathan Garcia, and Victor Munoz. TJ Williams is another returning big man that showed a lot of promise last season. He had 20/13 on William Carey and then 20/10 on Montreat on back-to-back nights before missing rest of season due to surgery. Jeffrey Selden also missed all of last season due to injury. Could be a really good defensive stopper for the Eagles if he stays healthy. Transferring in is KJ Rogers (Snead State) Maliek Sadler (MGA), Gabriel Rivera (Montreat), Jordan Johnson (Brewton-Parker). All four players had good seasons at their previous spots and should step into big roles with Faulkner.

## Sleeper Team



I like this Thomas squad. There I said it. I think Collin Cotter is a great young coach and I like this team he has built. Jailin Lee was one of the more under the radar "transfers" in the NAIA this season. Coach Cotter was able to talk him into returning. I think it's a great fit for both, so I am glad. The Night Hawks return seven players though and bring in four really nice transfers with really good positional size that should help them a lot. The Night Hawks have depth, size, athleticism and scoring. Don't sleep on the Night Hawks of Thomas!

## SSAC Predictions

Regular Season Champ

2nd Auto-bid Prediction

National Tourney Qualifiers





# SUN CONFERENCE

# PREVIEW

# Sun Preview

The Sun Conference is a 9-team conference that features teams from Florida and Georgia.

The Sun Conference has done a great job, as an entire league, of uniting to figure out how to keep driving the league forward. It's really been great for the league over the past couple of seasons and resulted in more teams from the league reaching the post season. It's also resulted in some really great basketball. Last year the Sun Conference finished the season with five teams qualifying for the NAIA National Tourney.

Heading into 2024-25 the Sun has a lot to be optimistic about again. Four just having 9-teams, it's a deep league. FloMo and Ave, for us, enter the season ahead of the rest of the pack. Keiser very closely, in their own tier behind them. The rest of the Sun Conference is mostly, for us, not a wait and see, but a **WANT TO SEE**. There is a lot of "intrigue. A lot of questions, but also a lot of hope, hype and excitement in the Sun teams 4-9. Excited to see the teams get after it soon!

2023-24 Regular Season Champion



2023-24 Tournament Champion



2023-24 National Tournament Qualifiers



Deepest Tournament Run since merger

Quarterfinals (2023)



Last National Title Winner

## What is New?

IN



NEW COLLEGE OF FLORIDA

## Coaches



Hudson Welty



Zach Moss



Matt Warren

# SUN CONFERENCE

## Favorite



Ave returns their entire roster from last season which includes Jack Watkins, Michael Klekas, Jonathan Effertz, Nicholas Filchner, Jaylen White, Miles Monchecourt, Noryen Lasley. They were one of the best shooting teams in the country and unfortunately for them, after knocking off Southwestern (KS) in the 1st round, had to battle Langston in the Round of 32 last season. Who, they had actually had down for a long period of time, before Langston got their defense finally locked in and ended their season. This is a fun Ave team though who can basically shoot 1-5!

## Other contenders



Latavious Mitchell (1st Team All-Sun) is back for FloMo as is Felix Uadiale, Calvin Payton and Diamond Smith (Redshirted last season). Coach Thomas is also bringing in a talented group of returners in Terrin Hamilton (Union), Elijah Tate (D1 Texas St), Mohamad Diallo (D2 Clayton St), Jason Danso (Southwestern CC) Winston Cole Tacoma CC, Dahmir Bishop D1 (FGCU), Maximo Morantinos (Sienna Heights) and Cameron Noel (Cabrillo CC), Diallo, at 7' is an interesting one because of the way Coach Thomas coaches defense. If they can get him figured out on both ends of the floor, their defense will be unbearable for opposing offenses. Similar to the Shawnee/EJ Onu days. Lots of others to like on this team! Talent, skill and size! Have a shot to be SPECIAL!



It's no secret by now how much we love Bobo Sirmans and Vincent Miszkiewicz. It's one of the best G/F combos in the country. Vincent is only one of just three 1st team All-Americans returning from last season and led the entire NAIA in rebounding last year. Coach Chief Bryant is adding some depth to this year's team in the form of a few transfers. Starting with Quamar Gresham (Central Lakes College) 2x MCAC POY and HM JUCO All-American. Tyreon "Speedy" Payne (Merced College) 1st Team All-League. Malik Kabia (Raritan Valley CC), Cameron Stitt (D1 Delaware State) and Gregory "Jackson" Kennedy (Coastal Alabama -North CC). Freshman, Logham Downie will also have a chance to make an impact as well. This is a fun Keiser team that has a chance to be VERY good!



King Warren (1st Team All-Sun) and Dalon Dean (2023 1st Team All-Sun) will be back in Bobcat Uniforms this season. Dalon Dean led the nation in 3's in 2023 and looks to have a big season for St Thomas. New Head Coach, Zach Moss, brings in six new transfers; Donavan Short (D1 Wisc GB), Sean Shore (Southeastern) Colin Nutter (Sienna Heights) Adrian Cruz (Limestone) Esteban Llubres (Miami Dade) Emmanuel Newsome (D1 Oakland University). Freshman, Koye Rondeno (Tx Top 100) will also be in the mix. Little different look STU squad as Coach Moss builds the team in his own vision, but the talent is still there!

## Sleeper Team



The Fire went out and hired Hudson Welty to take over the helm. Coach Helty is bringing back Joshua Blazquez and Derek Murphy back. He also was able to go out and get some good transfers in Ahmad Johnson (Union), Kyonte Thomas (Pikeville) Diego Platas (d2 Lincoln Memorial) and Nelson Reynolds (Moberly CC). Altogether there are 10 new faces for SEU. It may not look always look pretty out of the gates, but a team to watch as season progresses.

---

## SUN Predictions

### Auto-bid Prediction



### National Tourney Qualifiers





# Bracketology

## REPORT



Sponsored By:



### NAISMITH

1		Langston (OK)
16		Bellevue (NE)
8		Faulkner (AL)
9		Xavier (LA)
4		Concordia (NE)
13		IU South Bend
5		Cumberlands (KY)
12		Philaner Smith
3		The Master's (CA)
14		Central Methodist (MO)
6		Florida Memorial
11		Pikeville
2		Oklahoma Wesleyan
15		Olivet Nazarene
7		MACU (OK)
10		MNU (KS)

### DUER

College of Idaho		1
UC Merced		16
Life (GA)		8
Morningside (IA)		9
Oregon Tech		4
IU Kokomo		13
Baker (KS)		5
IU Northwest		12
LSU Shreveport		3
Campbellsville		14
Keiser (FL)		6
Loyola (LA)		11
Arizona Christian		2
U of the Southwest		15
Kansas Wesleyan		7
Huntington (IN)		10



### CRAMER

1		Indiana Wesleyan
16		WOU (MD)
8		Indiana Tech
9		Dordt (IA)
4		Madonna (MI)
13		Hope International (CA)
5		Ave Maria (FL)
12		Shawnee State (OH)
3		Northwestern (IA)
14		St. Thomas (FL)
6		Columbia (MO)
11		Mobile (AL)
2		Grace (IN)
15		Tougaloo (MS)
7		Peru State (NE)
10		Cornerstone (MI)

### LISTON

Georgetown (KY)		1
Johnson (TN)		16
Spring Arbor (MI)		8
Wayland Baptist (TX)		9
Montana Tech		4
Evangel (MO)		13
Lewis-Clark St (ID)		5
William Woods (Mo)		12
LSU Alexandria		3
Southwestern (KS)		14
Central Baptist (AR)		6
Rochester (MI)		11
Freed-Hardeman		2
Florida College		15
Nelson U (OK)		7
St. Mary of The Woods		10