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## St. Norbert Tops Coaches Poll In Bid For Fifth Straight Title

RIPON, WIS. -- The Midwest Conference men's soccer coaches have made it clear that St. Norbert is the favorite to take home the 2006 MWC men's soccer championship. From there, the only thing that is clear in the 2006 MWC Men's Soccer Preseason Coaches Poll is that things are anything but.

The Green Knights, who received eight of the 10 possible first-place votes in the poll, will be in search of their fifth consecutive MWC title this season. The team's ranked from second to sixth were separated by 18 points total, with no team occupying any of those five slots being separated by more than six points. Each of the top six teams in the poll received at least one second-place vote, while more than one top five finisher was picked to finish as low as eighth.

Despite receiving the two remaining first-place votes, Lawrence just managed to edge Carroll for second place in the poll, with the Pioneers following in third. Lake Forest ranked fourth, besting Ripon by a point to round out the top five. Beloit finished three points behind the Red Hawks in sixth place, followed by Grinnell and Monmouth, respectively, who were also separated by three points. Knox and Illinois College rounded out the poll in order.

Monmouth's **George Perry** will be the lone new face on the sidelines in the MWC this season, as the Fighting Scots new head coach took over for the departed **Rue Carthew**. Carthew moves a few miles down the road to Knox, where he will serve as an assistant coach on the Prairie Fire staff.

St. Norbert's **Dale Rhodes** and Lawrence's **Blake Johnson** met in the title match at the 2005 MWC Tournament and went on to share the MWC Coach of the Year honors. Rhodes' Green Knights have featured two MWC Player of the Year winners since 2000, including 2005 graduate **Peter Bernardy**, who took home last year's award.

### --2006 MWC Men's Soccer Preseason Coaches Poll--

Rnk	Team (1st place votes)
1.	St. Norbert (8)
2.	Lawrence (2)
3.	Carroll
4.	Lake Forest
5.	Ripon
6.	Beloit
7.	Grinnell
8.	Monmouth
9.	Knox
10.	Illinois College

#### 1. St. Norbert Green Knights 2005 Record: 16-3-0 (9-0-0 MWC) Returning All-MWC 1st Team: 3 2nd Team: 1

Senior forward **Nick Bonifas** (12 goals, 4 assists), senior defender **Bill Lanser** and sophomore goalkeeper **Mike Rietveld** (1.07 gaa, 4 sho) give **Dale Rhodes'** squad a trio of returning all-conference first teamers in St. Norbert's bid for a fifth consecutive MWC title. Bonifas led the conference in goals, points, game-winning goals and shots last season. The Green Knights return four of their top five scorers from a year ago, including junior forward **Sebi Buyukaslan** (4 goals, 6 assists). Senior midfielder/forward **Andrew Winters** (5 goals, 9 assists), an All-MWC pick a year ago, adds more depth to an already dangerous offense.

#### 2. Lawrence Vikings 2005 Record: 9-7-1 (7-2-0 MWC) Returning All-MWC 1st Team: 1 2nd Team: 3

**Blake Johnson**, the 2005 MWC Co-Coach of the Year, has led the Vikings to the MWC tourney three years in a row and an appearance in the tournament title match last season. The Lawrence offense will be led by junior forwards **Joe Sluhoski** (3 assists) and **Ryan Pikna** (4 assists) who both netted seven goals apiece a year ago. Freshman midfielder **Nick Dufficy** (4 points) earned first team all-conference honors as a freshman in 2005, while junior **Nate Reynolds** (2 assists) leads the defense. Sophomore **Hunter Ryan** will be in the mix for the goaltending job.

#### 3. Carroll Pioneers 2005 Record: 6-8-2 (5-4-0 MWC) Returning All-MWC 1st Team: --- 2nd Team: 3

The Pioneers followed an undefeated conference run in 2004 with a disappointing fifth-place MWC finish last season, but head coach **Rick Mobley** welcomes back a talented roster that includes the top six scorers from 2005. A trio of sophomores will help pace the Pioneers offense in midfielder **Dona Lado** (3 goals, 5 assists), forward **Derek Marie** (4 goals, 3 assists) and forward **David Hansen** (11 points). Senior **Joey Shoemaker**, who tied for the team lead with five goals last season, will provide experience and leadership for a young team.

#### 4. Lake Forest Foresters 2005 Record: 10-5-1 (6-3-0 MWC) Returning All-MWC 1st Team: 2 2nd Team: 2

The 2005 season marked the eighth in a row where the Foresters qualified for the MWC Tournament under head coach **Ed Kositzki**. The Foresters will be in the mix again this year, as a pair of sophomore all-conference first teamers return in defender **Josh Enck** (2 points) and midfielder **Attila Schmidt** (7 goals, 9 assists). Sophomore forward **Steven Stavropoulos** (4 goals, 3 assists) adds more punch to the Lake Forest offense, while versatile junior (continued on page 2)



**Jacob Elperin** (0.80 gaa), who started 14 games in goal last season, will likely see time at goalkeeper and forward again in 2006.

**5. Ripon Red Hawks**                      **2005 Record:** 6-9-1 (6-2-1 MWC)  
**Returning All-MWC 1st Team:** 2      **2nd Team:** 3

Ripon head coach **Todd Parker** returns a league-high five all-conference players from last seasons MWC tourney qualifying team, including first-team selections in seniors **David Freisleben** and **Price Ward**. Freisleben (112 saves, 5 sho) was one of the conference's top goaltenders last year, while Ward tied for the team lead in goals with sophomore midfielder **Demba Camara** (4 goals, 1 assist). Junior midfielder **Andrew McKee** (5 points) adds offensive depth for the Red Hawks.

**6. Beloit Buccaneers**                      **2005 Record:** 7-7-2 (3-5-1 MWC)  
**Returning All-MWC 1st Team:** ---      **2nd Team:** 3

**Tim Schmiechen's** Beloit squad will be led by a trio of seniors in 2006. defender **Corey Ferrar** (1 assist), forward **Michael Findley** (4 goals, 4 assists) and midfielder **Chris Johnson** (5 goals, 1 assist) all return after earning All-MWC accolades a year ago. Junior midfielder **Chas Fricke** was also a big part of Beloit's offense last season when he netted four goals. **Chris Lowry** saw action in goal in seven contests last season and will have the inside track to the job in 2006.

**7. Grinnell Pioneers**                      **2005 Record:** 5-9-2 (2-7-0 MWC)  
**Returning All-MWC 1st Team:** ---      **2nd Team:** ---

Grinnell head coach **Brian Jaworski** hopes to mix a talented cast of upperclassmen with an influx of young players to help the Pioneers make their first MWC tourney appearance since 2000. Twenty-two first-year players join the squad in 2006, while junior forwards **Ben Schrage** (6 goals, 5 assists) and **Andrew Walsh** (6 goals, 1 assist) both return after leading the team in scoring last season. Junior goalkeeper **Samuel Lancaster** (1.73 gaa) also returns after making 104 saves in 2005.

**8. Monmouth Fighting Scots**              **2005 Record:** 6-7-3 (3-4-2 MWC)  
**Returning All-MWC 1st Team:** ---      **2nd Team:** 2

New head coach **George Perry** will look to lead Monmouth to its first MWC Tournament appearance since 2001 in his first year at the helm. The return of junior midfielder **Trevor Neff** (6 goals), senior forward **Sam Beciri** (4 goals, 3 assists) and sophomore midfielder **Brandon Stacey** (4 goals) means Perry will have the team's three leading goal scorers from a year ago in action. Senior goaltender **Brad Hofmann** (1.82 gaa) also returns after leading the conference in saves (119) last year.

**9. Knox Prairie Fire**                      **2005 Record:** 4-11-1 (1-7-1 MWC)  
**Returning All-MWC 1st Team:** ---      **2nd Team:** 1

The return of senior **David Connelly** (7 goals) and sophomore **Clint Moore** (4 goals, 2 assists) give Knox head coach **Lucas Robison** a solid one-two scoring tandem in 2006. Senior **Dan Sundquist** also returns to bolster the Prairie Fire offense after recording a team-best three assists in 2005. Senior **Tom Stellard** (43 saves) and sophomore **Cary Archer** (46 saves) split time in goal last season, with Archer earning the decision in all four Knox victories.

**10. Illinois College Blueboys**              **2005 Record:** 2-13-1 (0-8-1 MWC)  
**Returning All-MWC 1st Team:** ---      **2nd Team:** ---

Seven different players on **Shane Taylor's** Illinois College squad scored goals last season, but no player managed to net more than two goals. The return of junior midfielder **Cailean Bailey** (5 points) and senior forward **Cory Dehler**, who both netted two goals apiece last year, should help improve the offense. Junior defender **Samuel Black** will offer experience on the Blueboys defense and may also see time as a goaltender. The Blueboys 2006 roster features 12 freshman and 16 new players overall.

**--MWC Past Champions--**

- 1971 Beloit
- 1972 Beloit
- 1973 Knox \*  
*Cornell* \*
- 1974 Lake Forest \*  
Beloit \*
- 1975 Lake Forest
- 1976 Lake Forest
- 1977 *Carleton*
- 1978 *Carleton* \*  
*U. of Chicago* \*
- 1979 Lake Forest
- 1980 Lake Forest
- 1981 Lake Forest
- 1982 *Cornell*
- 1983 Lake Forest
- 1984 Grinnell
- 1985 Lawrence \*  
Lake Forest \*
- 1986 Lake Forest \*  
St. Norbert \*
- 1987 St. Norbert
- 1988 Knox
- 1989 Grinnell
- 1990 Illinois College
- 1991 Lake Forest
- 1992 Lake Forest
- 1993 Grinnell
- 1994 Grinnell
- 1995 Lake Forest
- 1996 Lake Forest
- 1997 Ripon
- 1998 Ripon
- 1999 Ripon
- 2000 Ripon
- 2001 Lake Forest
- 2002 St. Norbert
- 2003 St. Norbert
- 2004 St. Norbert
- 2005 St. Norbert

**--MWC Tournament Champions--**

- Grinnell
- Illinois College
- Lake Forest
- Lake Forest
- Grinnell
- Grinnell
- Lake Forest
- Lake Forest
- Ripon
- Ripon
- Ripon
- Ripon
- Monmouth
- St. Norbert
- St. Norbert
- St. Norbert
- St. Norbert

\* - Indicates Co-champs

**--MWC Title Breakdown--**

- Lake Forest - 14** ('74, '75, '76, '79, '80, '81, '83 '85, '86, '91, '92, '95, '96, '01)
- St. Norbert - 6** ('86, '87, '02, '03, '04, '05)
- Grinnell - 4** ('84, '89, '93, '94)
- Ripon - 4** ('97, '98, '99, '00)
- Beloit - 3** ('71, '72, '74)
- Carleton - 2* ('77, '78)
- Cornell - 2* ('73, '82)
- Knox - 2** ('73, '88)
- Univ. of Chicago - 1* ('78)
- Illinois College - 1** ('90)
- Lawrence - 1** ('85)

*Italics indicate former MWC members*



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