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Midwest Conference Softball

Ripon, Lake Forest Tagged As Division Favorites In 2009

RIPON, WIS. -- Coming off of its first Championship in school history, Ripon has been voted as the preseason favorite for the North Division in the 2009 Midwest Conference Coaches Poll. The Red Hawks squeezed out a victory in the second game of a double-header with Carroll to make it into the Conference Tournament as the North's No. 2 seed. Ripon went on to win its first two tourney games before falling to Lake Forest - setting-up a decisive second game versus the Foresters. In convincing fashion, the Red Hawks defeated host Lake Forest 7-1 thus capturing the 2008 Championship. St. Norbert has received one first place vote and fills the second spot of the poll after taking the North Division regular season title a year ago. Missing out on the Conference Tournament by one game, Carroll has received a first place vote and holds the No. 3 ranking, while Lawrence and Beloit round out the North in fourth and fifth place, respectively.

The lone coaching change in the North comes at Ripon where 2006 and 2007 MWC North Pitcher of the Year **Jen Mueller** takes over the coaching reigns from 2008 MWC North Coach of the Year **Kelly Witte**.

--2009 MWC NORTH Softball Preseason Coaches Poll--

NORTH DIVISION (1st place votes)

1. Ripon (3)
2. St. Norbert (1)
3. Carroll (1)
4. Lawrence
5. Beloit

--NORTH DIVISION--

1. Ripon Red Hawks **2008 Record: 20-14 (6-2 MWC)**

Returning All-MWC: 4 (Geenen, Goudreau, Knorr, Reichhart)
First-year Head Coach **Jen Mueller** inherits a Ripon squad that returns two decorated seniors in **Natalie Geenen**, the 2007 and 2008 MWC North Player of the Year, and **Andrea Knorr**, the 2008 MWC North Pitcher of the Year. Also bolstering the line-up will be a pair of All-MWC performers in juniors **Jackie Reichhart** and **Jessica Goudreau**.

Top Returning Players:

Pos.	Player	B-T	Yr.	Stats
SS	Natalie Geenen	R-R	Sr.	.411, 29 R, 21 RBI, 7 HR
C	Jessica Goudreau	R-R	Jr.	.301, 21 R, 13 RBI, .987 Fld%
DH	Jackie Reichhart	L-L	Jr.	.391, 12 R, 24 RBI, 8 Dbls
P	Andrea Knorr	R-L	Sr.	13-9, 2.14 ERA, 96 K, .238 OBA
P	Brittnee Peotter	R-L	So.	7-4, 2.91 ERA, 83 K, .252 OBA

RIPON, WIS. -- Two years removed from its five-year title streak, Lake Forest is favored to win the South Division in the 2009 Midwest Conference Coaches Poll. The Foresters were one game away from their seventh Championship, but fell to Ripon 7-1 in the title game. The team received three of four possible first-place votes to top Monmouth College, who resides in the No. 2 spot, after receiving a pair of first-place votes. The Fighting Scots will be looking to get back to the Conference Tournament for the second consecutive season. Illinois College was picked to finish third as the Lady Blues will try to repeat their 2007 trip to the tourney after missing out last season. Grinnell is slated to finish in fourth place, while Knox follows in fifth.

There will be a new pair of coaches in the South as **Patty Keenan** will take over for **Jami Strinz** at Knox and **Chad Nelson** becomes the new skipper at Illinois College, replacing **Maggie Ryan**.

--2009 MWC SOUTH Softball Preseason Coaches Poll--

SOUTH DIVISION (1st place votes)

1. Lake Forest (3)
2. Monmouth (2)
3. Illinois College
4. Grinnell
5. Knox

--SOUTH DIVISION--

1. Lake Forest Foresters **2008 Record: 21-14 (7-1 MWC)**

Returning All-MWC: 5 (Galasek, Neill, Norton, Pfund, Rainey)
Joe Kinsella returns for his third season at the Lake Forest helm and is looking to start a title run of his own. The Foresters are in position to do so, returning five All-MWC selections. **Shelby Neill**, the 2007 MWC South Player of the Year, headlines a junior-laden infield that includes **Mallory Norton**, **Jill Pfund**, and **Tracy Rainey**. Sophomore **Gretchen Galasek** returns to bolster the Lake Forest pitching staff.

Top Returning Players:

Pos.	Player	B-T	Yr.	Stats
1B	Shelby Neill	R-R	Jr.	.298, 20 R, 28 RBI, 7 HR, .5 Dbls
3B	Mallory Norton	R-R	Jr.	.347, 22 R, 27 RBI, 3 HR, 12 Dbls
SS	Tracy Rainey	R-R	Jr.	.383, 35 R, 32 RBI, 11 Dbls, 1 HR
2B	Jill Pfund	R-R	Jr.	.344, 17 R, 32 RBI, 4 Dbls, 7 HR
P	Jeannette Andresen	R-R	Jr.	8-3, 3.33 ERA, 23 K, 63 IP
P	Gretchen Galasek	R-R	So.	5-5, 3.74 ERA, 82.1 IP, 37 K



--NORTH DIVISION--

2. St. Norbert Green Knights 2008 Record: 16-16 (6-2 MWC)
Returning All-MWC: 3 (Krueger, Oehlke, Palmer)
 2008 North Division winner St. Norbert returns a pair of All-MWC First-Teamers in juniors **Brienne Oehlke** and **Tracy Palmer**. Sophomore **Kayla Krueger**, the daughter of Head Coach **Joann Krueger**, was a Second-Team selection while leading the Green Knights in batting average (.321) during her freshman campaign.

Top Returning Players:

Pos.	Player	B-T	Yr.	Stats
IF/P	Kayla Krueger	L-R	So.	.321, 5 R, 8 RBI, 4 Dbls, 1.000 Fld% 3.20 ERA, 8-8, 102.2 IP, 30 K
OF	Brienne Oehlke	R-R	Jr.	.247, 14 R, 27 RBI, 4 HR, .734 Slg%
SS	Tracy Palmer	R-R	Jr.	.295, 21 R, 1 HR, 7 RBI, .362 OBP
OF	Kim Sawyer	R-R	Sr.	.298, 14 R, 1 HR, 7 Dbls, 11 RBI

3. Carroll Lady Pioneers 2008 Record: 14-10 (5-3 MWC)
Returning All-MWC: 3 (Deakins, Messler, Reith)
 Eva Klamann's Lady Pioneers went an impressive 14-10 last year after tallying only eight overall victories each of the previous three seasons. Carroll is on the verge of a MWC Tournament berth as it returns three All-Conference performers in seniors **Kelsey Deakins** and **Jackie Messler** and junior **Nicole Reith**. Deakins will be the anchor of the pitching staff after finishing 2008 with a 2.24 ERA while Messler and Reith both hit over .350.

Top Returning Players:

Pos.	Player	B-T	Yr.	Stats
OF	Jackie Messler	Sr.	R-R	.422, 12 R, 3 Dbls, 9 RBI
INF	Trista Corrigan	Sr.	R-R	.321, 9 R, 9 RBI, 1 HR
OF	Nicole Reith	Jr.	R-R	.366, 10 R, 2 Dbls, 4 RBI
P	Kelsey Deakins	Sr.	R-R	8-5, 2.24 ERA, 84.1 IP, 54 K
P	Lorin Kelley	Jr.	R-R	6-4, 4.73 ERA, 66.2 IP, 47 K

4. Lawrence Vikings 2008 Record: 9-16 (2-6 MWC)
Returning All-MWC: 2 (Goodson, Gurholt)
 After five consecutive seasons in the MWC Tournament, Lawrence has missed the postseason in 2008 for the second straight year. Looking to get the program back on track Head Coach **Kim Tatro** will rely on All-MWC First-Teamer **Alex Goodson**. The junior nearly hit .400 a season ago while also scoring 21 runs and knocking in 16 more.

Top Returning Players:

Pos.	Player	B-T	Yr.	Stats
3B	Jenna Reichel	L-R	Sr.	.327, 11 R, 4 RBI
OF	Alex Goodson	R-R	Jr.	.390, 21 R, 16 RBI, 7 Dbls, 1 HR
OF	Amanda Hauser	L-R	Sr.	.278, 11 R, 11 RBI, 5 Dbls
P/2B	Meredith Foshag	R-R	Jr.	5-3, 2.45 ERA, 14 K, 51.1 IP

5. Beloit Buccaneers 2008 Record: 6-25 (1-7 MWC)
Returning All-MWC: 1 (Rybka)
 Second-year Head Coach **Kim Zarling** is still in the process of turning around a young Beloit team that was hit hard by graduation last year. Senior **Lauren Rybka** is the Buccaneers' lone returning All-Conference selection and will bolster a 15-woman roster that includes eight freshmen.

Top Returning Players:

Pos.	Player	B-T	Yr.	Stats
SS	Lauren Rybka	R-R	Sr.	.343, 18 R, 19 RBI, 5 Dbls
OF	Aria Walsh-Felz	R-R	So.	.297, 16 R, 10 RBI, 5 Dbls
UT/P	Tess Jacquez	R-R	So.	.274, 11 R, 19 RBI, 4 Dbls 1-2, 5.12 ERA, 10 K, 13.2 IP

--SOUTH DIVISION--

2. Monmouth Fighting Scots 2008 Record: 13-15 (5-3 MWC)
Returning All-MWC: 3 (Bell, Christensen, Dort)
 Head Coach **John Goddard** will attempt to lead Monmouth to their second consecutive Conference Tournament appearance in his second year at the helm. The Fighting Scots will rely on their experience as they return three All-Conference performers in senior **Sarah Christensen** and juniors **Kembra Bell** and **Maggie Dort**.

Top Returning Players:

Pos.	Player	B-T	Yr.	Stats
DH	Maggie Dort	R-R	Jr.	.320, 12 R, 15 RBI, 3 HR
3B	Kembra Bell	R-R	Jr.	.349, 11 R, 11 RBI, 7 Dbls
OF	Kristen Bickett	L-R	Sr.	.357, 6 R, 16 RBI, 1 HR, 5 Dbls
P	Sarah Christensen	R-R	Sr.	7-6, 3.62 ERA, 73 K, 89.0 IP
P	Amanda Murdock	R-R	Sr.	5-5, 5.20 ERA, 38 K, 70.0 IP

3. Illinois College Lady Blues 2008 Record: 14-14 (3-5 MWC)
Returning All-MWC: 1 (Morrison)
 First-year Head Coach **Chad Nelson** will look to take his Illinois College squad back to the MWC Tournament after a one-year hiatus. The Lady Blues will need to bolster their pitching staff as only three of their four from 2008 have been lost to graduation. Junior **Kacey Morrison** and sophomore **Syndi Szafranski** will carry the offense as both hit .402 a season ago.

Top Returning Players:

Pos.	Player	B-T	Yr.	Stats
SS	Kacey Morrison	R-R	Jr.	.402, 19 R, 31 RBI, 10 HR, 4 Dbls
3B	Syndi Szafranski	R-R	So.	.402, 24 R, 16 RBI, 3 HR
UT	Kendra George	R-R	So.	.258, 6 R, 2 Dbls, .900 Fld%

4. Grinnell Pioneers 2008 Record: 8-20 (3-5 MWC)
Returning All-MWC: 1 (Ward)
 Tom Sonnichsen's Grinnell squad will be led by senior **Darcy Ward** in the Pioneers attempt to climb the MWC standings. Ward nearly hit .500 last year while sophomores **Brianna Gallo** and **Erin Labasan** each hit near the .350 mark.

Top Returning Players:

Pos.	Player	B-T	Yr.	Stats
OF	Darcy Ward	L-L	Sr.	.488, 20 R, 3 Triples, 2 HR, 27 RBI
IF	Brianna Gallo	L-R	So.	.350, 16 R, 4 RBI, 9 SB
UT	Erin Labasan	R-R	So.	.349, 4 R, 3 Dbls, 9 RBI
P	Tess Cohen	R-R	Sr.	4-10, 4.97 ERA, 69.0 IP, 46 K

5. Knox Prairie Fire 2008 Record: 4-22 (2-6 MWC)
Returning All-MWC: ---
 Patty Keenan takes over a Knox program that has finished last in the South Division for four consecutive seasons. Junior **Cheyenne Cortez** will be the team's anchor in the line-up, but the Prairie Fire will need to improve upon their pitching which has finished at the bottom of the MWC the past three seasons.

Top Returning Players:

Pos.	Player	B-T	Yr.	Stats
3B	Kate Latshaw	R-R	Sr.	.243, 2 R, 2 Dbls, 3 RBI
OF	Cheyenne Cortez	R-R	Jr.	.312, 7 R, 8 RBI, 4 Dbls
P	Cory Bieber	R-R	So.	0-4, 8.44 ERA, 10 K, 34.0 IP



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