



Chris Graham
Commissioner
grahamc@midwestconference.org

www.midwestconference.org

Matt Troha
Sports Information Director
troham@midwestconference.org

--August 22, 2007-- Midwest Conference Women's Soccer

Road To MWC Title To Go Through Grinnell & Carroll Once Again

RIPON, WIS. -- Carroll and Grinnell may share the nickname of Pioneers, but the top of the standings in Midwest Conference Women's Soccer is no longer unfamiliar territory for either school. Two-time defending MWC champion Grinnell has handed Carroll its lone conference losses in each of the last two seasons, before eventually knocking off their fellow Pioneers in the MWC Tournament final. Grinnell opens the 2007 season by holding off Carroll once again, this time for the top spot in the 2007 MWC Preseason Coaches Poll.

Grinnell and Carroll accounted for all ten first-place votes for the second straight year, as Grinnell received seven first-place votes and Carroll three, one more for Carroll than a year ago. St. Norbert edged Lake Forest by five votes to finish third, while Monmouth followed the Foresters to fill-out the top five. Beloit was slated for a sixth-place finish, with Lawrence and Ripon picked to place seventh and eighth, respectively. Illinois College and Knox rounded out the poll's final two spots in order.

Nikki McLellan served as an assistant coach on Heather Benning's Grinnell staff last season, helping the Pioneers to an MWC title and conference tourney crown. McLellan replaces Jim Carothers, who continues on as the women's soccer coach at Galesburg High School, as the new Prairie Fire head coach.

For the first time in league history, the MWC Offensive and Defensive Players of the Year were both underclassmen and will be returning to the field after winning the league's top individual accolades. St. Norbert's Stephanie Gatyas won offensive honors after leading the conference in scoring as a freshman in 2006, while Grinnell's Rebecca Mackenzie was the MWC's top defensive player as a sophomore last season. Mackenzie anchored a Grinnell defense that allowed seven total goals and one goal in conference action. Grinnell's Benning was the 2006 MWC Coach of the Year, winning the award for the first time in her career.

--2007 MWC Women's Soccer Preseason Coaches Poll--

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

1. Grinnell Pioneers 2006 Record: 15-3-1 (9-0-0 MWC) Returning All-MWC 1st Team: 2 2nd Team: 3

Heather Benning and Grinnell are now the gold standard in the MWC after winning three of four MWC titles and three consecutive conference tournament crowns. A host of talented players return, including 2006 MWC Defensive Player of the Year Rebecca Mackenzie (5 goals), who will help the transition at goalkeeper following the graduation of Liz Carrier, one of the best keepers in conference history. Junior forward Katherine Ni (8 goals, 7 assists) and sophomore midfielder Miki Nakamura (7 goals, 9 assists) lead the offense after the duo tallied 23 points apiece in 2006. Senior midfielder Sofia Skraba (2 goals, 8 assists), junior defender Kelly Brouse (1 goal, 1 assist) and junior midfielder Amelia Stoker (4 goals, 4 assists) all return after earning all-conference accolades a year ago.

2. Carroll Lady Pioneers 2006 Record: 12-6-0 (8-1-0 MWC) Returning All-MWC 1st Team: 3 2nd Team: 2

Jason Bretzman has led Carroll to second-place conference finishes in each of the last three regular-seasons, while reaching the MWC tourney title match the past two years. The Lady Pioneers will have a strong shot at hoisting hardware in 2007 behind six double-digit point returnees and senior first-team All-MWC defenders Sammi Drews (3 goals) and Kari Scheelk (4 assists). A balanced offense runs through senior forward Hillary Reichardt (9 goals, 4 assists), junior forward Liz Melcher (9 goals) and senior midfielder Trisha Konkol (5 goals, 6 assists). Goalkeeper Ashlee Reinke (1.35 GAA, 84 saves) won 10 games last season as a freshman, including four shutouts. Carroll has not lost more than one conference match in a season since 2003.

3. St. Norbert Green Knights 2006 Record: 9-8-0 (7-2-0 MWC) Returning All-MWC 1st Team: 2 2nd Team: 1

St. Norbert returned to the MWC tournament in 2006 behind the play of freshmen forwards Stephanie Gatyas and Jessica Schadrie. Gatyas led the conference in shots (61), points (39) and goals (16) en route to being named the MWC Offensive Player of the Year. Schadrie wasn't far behind her teammate, finishing second in goals (13) and third in points (30), respectively. Head coach Dennis Detrie will count on All-MWC senior defender Corey Klein to help shore up the Green Knights defense in 2007 after allowing 58 goals last year. Junior midfielders Rachelle Barina (5 goals, 2 assists) and Ashley Haws (2 goals, 2 assists) are back to add more offensive firepower.

4. Lake Forest Foresters 2006 Record: 8-9-0 (6-3-0 MWC) Returning All-MWC 1st Team: 1 2nd Team: 2

Lake Forest returns its top six point leaders in 2007, as the Foresters look to qualify for the league tourney for the ninth time in head coach T.R. Bell's 11 seasons. All-MWC junior Katie Rice (5 goals, 1 assist) led the team in scoring from her defender position (continued on Page 2)



(continued from Page 1) a year ago, while senior forward **Marly Ashworth** (7 assists) will look to setup sophomore midfielder **Jocelyn Maneval** (4 goals, 2 assists) and junior midfielder **Jaymie Honold** (3 goals). Junior goalkeeper **Alison Lynch** (39 saves), who earned shutouts in two of her four starts a year ago, is the favorite to replace graduated **Kristyne Operzedek**.

5. Monmouth Fighting Scots 2006 Record: 10-5-1 (5-4-0 MWC)
Returning All-MWC 1st Team: --- 2nd Team: 1

Barry McNamara's Monmouth squad fell short of a league tourney berth last season after all four of the team's conference losses came against MWC tourney qualifiers, including a pair of 1-0 losses to Grinnell and Lake Forest. Junior midfielder **Sarah Kisner** (5 goals, 4 assists) and senior midfielder **Lauren Lafond** (3 goals, 3 assists) will be counted on to provide offense as the Scots try to replace their top five goal scorers from 2006. Sophomore goalkeeper **Kayla Trammell** (0.83 GAA, 37 saves) is the lone returnee from a two-goalie platoon last season and has the inside track to the position in 2007. Sophomore defenders **Whitney Ott** and **Lindsay Johnson** both gained a great deal of experience as freshmen.

6. Beloit Buccaneers 2006 Record: 7-8-0 (4-5-0 MWC)
Returning All-MWC 1st Team: --- 2nd Team: ---

Elizabeth Bartley's first season leading Beloit saw several underclassmen earn key roles on the squad, making the Bucs a legitimate contender for an MWC tourney slot in 2007. Leading the way is the forward tandem of sophomore **Anna Blankschien** (6 goals, 3 assists) and junior **Sophie Perry** (5 goals, 5 assists), who each tallied 15 points apiece last season. **Katie Schurr** started 15 games at goalkeeper as a freshman, making 74 saves to go with a 2.22 goals against average. Senior midfielder **Ellen Beasley** (4 goals, 1 assist) and junior forward **Emily Foubert** (1 goal, 2 assists) return to add more offensive punch.

7. Lawrence Vikings 2006 Record: 4-10-1 (2-7-0 MWC)
Returning All-MWC 1st Team: --- 2nd Team: 1

A young Viking squad struggled offensively in 2006, as **Blake Johnson's** team managed to score 15 goals in comparison to netting 42 scores two years prior. Lawrence will count on the experience of a trio of returning juniors in forward/midfielder **Jackie Bean** (3 goals, 2 assists), forward/midfielder **Ashlee Moore** (2 goals, 1 assist) and midfielder/defender **Alison Blegen** (2 goals, 1 assist) to help bolster scoring in 2007. Sophomore goalkeeper **Lindsey Ahlen** saw action in six contests last season and is the favorite to take over starting duties. Ahlen will be aided by the return of junior defender **Amanda Follett**.

8. Ripon Red Hawks 2006 Record: 5-10-1 (2-7-0 MWC)
Returning All-MWC 1st Team: --- 2nd Team: ---

Ripon's five victories a year ago under first-year head coach **Chris Trudell** equaled the win total from the two previous seasons combined. The Red Hawks top scorer from 2006 has graduated, but a young core led by sophomore midfielder **Musu Jammeh** (4 goals, 3 assists) and sophomore forward **Bess Liebergen** (2 goals, 1 assist) will help pick up the slack on offense. Sophomore goalkeeper **Brenda Zastrow** (104 saves) started 10 games last season, earning a pair of shutout victories. Junior defender **Katie Krueger** (1 goal, 1 assist) started every game for the Red Hawks in 2006.

9. Illinois College Lady Blues 2006 Record: 5-11-0 (2-7-0 MWC)
Returning All-MWC 1st Team: --- 2nd Team: ---

Illinois College's five victories in 2006 was the schools most since 2001 and fourth-year head coach **Bob McGuire** will look for his squad to take another step this season. Four players who notched four goals a season ago return, including junior defender **Mandy Hays** (4 goals, 1 assist), sophomore forward **Stacy Bergan** (4 goals, 1 assist) and senior forward **Jaime Weier**. The Lady Blues have depth at goalkeeper, where seniors **Caitlin Dooner** (43 saves) and **Julie Norman** (40 saves) split time last season. Dooner manned the pipes in 1-0 upset win over Lawrence last season.

10. Knox Prairie Fire 2006 Record: 1-13-2 (0-9-0 MWC)
Returning All-MWC 1st Team: --- 2nd Team: ---

Knox head coach **Nikki McLellan** enters her first season leading the Prairie Fire, where she will look to build a program that has not won a conference match since 2002. Senior midfielder/forward **Leah Heister** and sophomore midfielder **Rozie Smith** tied for the team lead with two goals apiece last season, while senior defender **Jessica Jones** added a pair of assists. **Jessica Platt** made an MWC-best 204 saves last season as a freshman, but will need help from her offense and defense after the team was outscored 42-0 in league play in 2006.

--Past MWC Champions--

1986	St. Norbert
1987	St. Norbert
1988	St. Norbert
1989	Lake Forest
1990	Grinnell
1991	Grinnell
1992	Grinnell
1993	Grinnell
1994	St. Norbert
1995	St. Norbert
1996	Grinnell
1997	St. Norbert
1998	Carroll
1999	Grinnell
2000	Lawrence
2001	Lake Forest
2002	Carroll
2003	Grinnell
2004	Lake Forest
2005	Grinnell
2006	Grinnell

--MWC Championship Breakdown--

Grinnell - 9 ('90, '91, '92, '93, '96, '99, '03, '05, '06)
St. Norbert - 6 ('86, '87, '88, '94, '95, '97)
Lake Forest - 3 ('89, '01, '04)
Carroll - 2 ('98, '02)
Lawrence - 1 ('00)

--Past MWC Tournament Champions--

1991	Grinnell
1992	St. Norbert
1993	Grinnell
1994	St. Norbert
1995	St. Norbert
1996	Grinnell
1997	St. Norbert
1998	Carroll
1999	Grinnell
2000	Lawrence
2001	Lawrence
2002	Carroll
2003	Lake Forest
2004	Grinnell
2005	Grinnell
2006	Grinnell



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