



News Release

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North Dakota Selected As Preseason Football Favorite

North Dakota has been picked as North Central Conference football favorite in both the preseason media and coaches polls released today. The two samples agreed on the top spot, but none of the other eight slots were the same in the two polls.

The 2006 season marks the introduction of two new teams, Central Washington and Western Washington, into the NCC.

In 2005, Minnesota Duluth, Nebraska-Omaha, North Dakota and South Dakota tied for the NCC title while Minnesota Duluth, Nebraska-Omaha and North Dakota made the field for the NCAA Division II Championship. North Dakota downed Minnesota Duluth before falling to Grand Valley State in the playoffs while Nebraska-Omaha received a first-round bye before being defeated by Saginaw Valley State.

This season's media poll marks the 52nd time that the media have made their predictions about the nine-team league that spans five states. The media have correctly picked the NCC champion in 15 of the past 24 seasons. In all, the media have successfully chosen the NCC champion 27 times in the 51 years in the poll's existence.

The NCC coaches have made predictions for the past 23 years. They have picked the champion 12 times.

Here are the selections with quotes from the responding media (with each pollster's first and second place picks in parenthesis):

Pat Sweeney, WDAZ-TV, Grand Forks (UND, UMD) - "UND's depth will make the difference. UMD will challenge with an experienced crew."

Tom Hansen, WBJR-TV, Duluth (USD, UNO) - "Welcome back the the NCC, Joe Salem. Should be another thrilling NCC season."

James R. Johnson, WDAZ-TV, Grand Forks (UND, UMD) - "There's only one way for UND to bid farewell to Division II."

Jeff Culhane, Coyote Sports Network (UNO, USD) - "With questions regarding the future of the league, one constant remains - on Saturday this is still the most competitive conference top-to-bottom in Division II football."

Joe Sunnen, The Bellingham Herald, (UND, UMD) - "The

2006 North Central Conference Football Preseason Media Poll										
Team	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	Total
North Dakota	11	3	5	0	0	0	0	0	0	158
South Dakota	3	8	4	0	2	2	0	0	0	137
Nebraska-Omaha	4	3	2	5	4	1	0	0	0	128
Minnesota Duluth	1	4	3	6	0	3	2	0	0	116
Central Washington	0	0	4	3	5	4	3	0	0	96
St. Cloud State	0	0	1	4	5	6	3	0	0	89
Augustana	0	1	0	2	3	2	8	2	1	72
Western Washington	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	9	8	32
Minnesota State	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	8	10	29

2006 North Central Conference Football Preseason Coaches Poll										
Team	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	Total
North Dakota	4	2	2	1	0	0	0	0	0	72
Nebraska-Omaha	3	3	2	1	0	0	0	0	0	71
South Dakota	2	4	2	1	0	0	0	0	0	70
St. Cloud State	0	0	1	2	5	1	0	0	0	53
Minnesota Duluth	0	0	1	2	2	4	0	0	0	45
Central Washington	0	0	1	2	2	3	0	1	0	31
Augustana	0	0	0	0	0	1	5	2	1	24
Minnesota State	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	3	3	18
Western Washington	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	3	5	14

Note: Points were awarded 9 for 1st, 8 for 2nd, etc. in both polls.

October 28th game between UND and UMD could decide the title."

Scott Heinle, KVRRTV, Fargo (USD, UNO) - "It will be interesting to see how the Washington schools fit into the mix."

Bruce Ciskie, KDAL-TV, Duluth (UMD, USD) - "UMD's defense will be vastly improved and Schlafke should have no problems adjusting to new offensive coaches."

Kevin Culhane, Coyote Sports Network (USD, UND) - "This year could easily be a repeat with the 'Big 5' battling for the top spot. The Coyote defense with key returnees and transfers will replace the Coyote offense as the best in the league. Defense wins championships. I look for the competitive Saturdays this season in the NCC."

Travis Morgan, KMEG-TV, Sioux City (UND, USD) - "Stefan Logan has the ability to carry the Coyotes to another NCC title."

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Jeff Fylling, KXRB, Sioux Falls (UNO, UND) - "From the shores of Gitche Gumee to the Pacific Ocean, the NCC remains DII's best and most balanced."

David Gustafson, UNO Play-by-Play, (UNO, USD) - "Should be another close finish for the top spot in the conference."

Mark Ovenden, KDLT-TV, Sioux Falls (UNO, UND) - "Tough to pick between UNO and UND. Logan keeps the Coyotes in the race. Augie might surprise if they stay healthy."

Michael Linnell, Minot Daily News, (UND, USD) - "Another wide open year. Any one of the top six could be champs and a four-way tie could easily happen again."

Brian Shawn, KVLV-TV, Fargo, (UND, USD) - "A three-horse race between USD, UND and UNO...Central Washington could be a sleeper."

Matt Zimmer, Argus Leader, (UND, AC) - "If anyone can win on the road, they might be good."

Steve Imming, WNAX, Yankton (UND, USD) - "Title contention runs deep, but UND could seperate from the rest."

Chad Smith, KLGR, Redwood Falls, Minn. (UND, UNO) - "Still have to like the Sioux. UNO, USD, SCSU and UMD have pieces, but also have skill position experience."

Jon Nowacki, Duluth News-Tribune, (UND, USD) - "The league looks especially tough and wide open with any of five teams as having a legimate shot at capturing the league title."

-NCC-

Track Record

Here is the track record of the sportswriters and sportscasters:

Year	Media Pick	Actual Champion
1955	South Dakota State	South Dakota State
1956	South Dakota State	Morningside
1957	Morningside	South Dakota State
1958	South Dakota State	North Dakota
1959	South Dakota State	Augustana
1960	Augustana	Northern Iowa
1961	North Dakota	No. Iowa/So. Dak. St.
1962	South Dakota State	No. Iowa/So. Dak. St.
1963	Northern Iowa	South Dakota State
1964	Northern Iowa	UNI/NDSU/UND
1965	Northern Iowa	North Dakota State
1966	North Dakota	North Dakota/No. Dak. St.
1967	North Dakota State	North Dakota State
1968	North Dakota State	North Dakota State
1969	North Dakota State	North Dakota State
1970	North Dakota State	North Dakota State
1971	North Dakota State	North Dakota State
1972	North Dakota	UND/NDSU/USD
1973	North Dakota	No. Dak. St./South Dakota
1974	North Dakota State	NDSU/UND/USD
1975	North Dakota	North Dakota
1976	North Dakota	North Dakota State
1977	North Dakota State	North Dakota State
1978	North Dakota State	South Dakota
1979	Nebraska-Omaha	North Dakota
1980	North Dakota	Northern Colorado
1981	North Dakota	North Dakota State
1982	North Dakota State	North Dakota State
1983	North Dakota State	No. Dak. St./Neb.-Omaha
1984	North Dakota State	No. Dak. St./Neb.-Omaha
1985	North Dakota State	North Dakota State
1986	North Dakota State	North Dakota State
1987	North Dakota State	Minnesota State, Mankato
1988	North Dakota State	North Dakota State
1989	North Dakota State	St. Cloud State
1990	North Dakota State	North Dakota State
1991	North Dakota State	North Dakota State
1992	North Dakota State	North Dakota State
1993	North Dakota State	North Dakota/Minn. St., Mkto.
1994	North Dakota State	No. Dak. St./North Dakota
1995	North Dakota	North Dakota
1996	North Dakota State	Nebraska-Omaha
1997	Northern Colorado	Northern Colorado
1998	Northern Colorado	N. Colorado/Neb.-Omaha
1999	Northern Colorado	N. Colorado/North Dakota
2000	North Dakota State	Nebraska-Omaha
2001	North Dakota State	North Dakota
2002	North Dakota	N. Colorado/St. Cloud State
2003	St. Cloud State	North Dakota
2004	North Dakota	Nebraska-Omaha
2005	Nebraska-Omaha	UMD/UNO/UND/USD
2006	North Dakota	