

News Release



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South Dakota Dominates Men's Basketball Media Poll

South Dakota was picked to win the North Central Conference men's basketball title on 18 of the 19 submitted ballots in a preseason poll of the media.

The Coyotes posted a 2006-07 record of 23-7 overall and tied 10-2 in the NCC, tying for the regular-season title and winning the North Central Conference tournament. The Coyotes were joined by St. Cloud State and Minnesota State in the NCAA Men's Basketball Championship.

South Dakota fell in the first round of the tournament by virtue of a 95-88 defeat to Nebraska-Kearney. Minnesota State advanced to the region finals before being upended by eventual NCAA runner-up Winona State.

Nineteen media members responded to the 32nd annual poll. South Dakota was chosen as the champions by 18 of the poll participants and finished second on another ballot to dominate the field. Minnesota State garnered the only other first-place vote in the query and finished a distant second while St. Cloud State was right behind in third.

Non-conference action opens Friday with six of the seven teams in action. Conference play opens Thursday, January 10th.

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

Mick Garry, Argus Leader, Sioux Falls (USD, MSU) - "USD is the obvious pick here. The challenge for the Coyotes will be to handle the pressure of fulfilling lofty expectations while continuing to improve over the course of the season. Having a strong Morningside team as a travel partner will certainly help their cause."

Kevin Culhane, Coyote Sports Network (USD, MSU) - "With everyone returning for South Dakota, the Coyotes will lock up the final NCC men's title. It's been a great run for the NCC and best of luck to everyone next season."

Jeff Fylling, KIKN Radio, Sioux Falls (USD, MSU) - "Revelation is among us. A red storm will end the NCC."

Joe VanGoor, Coyote Sports Network (USD, MSU) - "USD - really good up and down and all-around - will have to prove it on the road."

Matt Zimmer, Argus Leader, Sioux Falls (USD, SCSU) - "USD is going to beat the (heck) out of everybody."

Jason Gibson, The Gateway, Omaha (USD, SCSU) - "It's South Dakota and everyone else in the NCC this year. Look for St. Cloud State to be a possible darkhorse as they will return two-time All-NCC forward David Dreas for his senior season."

Dan Myers, MSU Reporter (MSU, USD) - "It should be another interesting race between MSU and USD to determine the NCC champion."

Scott Swygman, Clear Channel, Grand Forks (USD, UND) - "Just too hard to go against the Coyotes. Sioux will be much improved. Should be a great final NCC race."

2007-2008 North Central Conference Men's Basketball Preseason Media Poll

| Team | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | Total |
|------------------|----|---|---|---|---|---|----|-------|
| South Dakota | 18 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 132 |
| Minnesota State | 1 | 8 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 0 | 0 | 99 |
| St. Cloud State | 0 | 7 | 7 | 3 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 94 |
| Minnesota Duluth | 0 | 1 | 4 | 2 | 5 | 3 | 4 | 59 |
| North Dakota | 0 | 1 | 2 | 4 | 4 | 5 | 3 | 57 |
| Augustana | 0 | 0 | 2 | 4 | 6 | 5 | 2 | 56 |
| Nebraska-Omaha | 0 | 0 | 0 | 3 | 1 | 5 | 10 | 35 |

Note: Points were awarded 7 for 1st, 6 for 2nd, etc.

Brian MacPherson, St. Cloud Times (USD, SCSU) - "South Dakota is the team to beat, but look for North Dakota to jump into the upper half after a tough season last year."

Duke Deslauriers, KCCR Radio, Pierre (USD, MSU) - "The final year for the NCC will be a USD sweep for the men and women. USD is loaded for men and the swansong for Chad Lavin will be a memorable one."

Jim Bollman, KNOX Radio, Grand Forks (USD, SCSU) - "Coyotes seem a bit ahead of the rest - pretty balanced after that."

Steve Imming, WNAX Radio, Yankton (USD, UMD) - "Coyotes appear a solid choice, could sweep league foes."

Jeff Radcliffe, KPTM TV, Omaha (USD, SCSU) - "Should be competitive from top to bottom as we say so long to a great conference."

Brian Shawn, KVLV TV, Fargo (USD, MSU) - "South Dakota is a Division I team playing Division II. Augustana could surprise some people. A lot of unknowns remain in other programs."

Jeff Culhane, KVTR Radio, Yankton (USD, SCSU) - "USD returns everyone from a regular season and postseason conference tournament conference championship team in 2006-07. They have too much firepower for the rest of the league."

Stu Whitney, Argus Leader, Sioux Falls (USD, MSU) - "The Coyotes get a start on their transition by taking the floor with a Division I-caliber squad."

Jon Nowacki, Duluth News Tribune (USD, MSU) - "South Dakota appears to have too much returning firepower for any team to make a run at them, but that is, of course, on paper. Should be an interesting, wide open final year of NCC basketball after nearly all of last year's all-conference performers graduated."

-NCC-