



MISSOURI VALLEY CONFERENCE BASEBALL

MVC BASEBALL PRESEASON COACHES' POLL: FEBRUARY 1, 2012

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Coaches Select Missouri State as Missouri Valley Conference Baseball Favorite

ST. LOUIS – Missouri State, which returns a dominating young pitching staff and a wealth of depth from last year's squad, has been tabbed as the league favorite in the annual coaches' preseason poll, receiving five of eight first-place votes.

The Bears tallied 60 points and were a close favorite over second-place pick Creighton (53 points). Wichita State (47 points) was picked to finish in the third position.

Indiana State was selected in fourth place with 37 points, followed by Illinois State in fifth (34) and Southern Illinois in the sixth slot (31). Bradley (15) and Evansville (11) round out the final two positions in the poll.

The Valley demonstrates a depth of talent and experience returning to the league this season. The coaches have voted 15 players representing all eight teams to the 2012 preseason all-MVC baseball squad.



Missouri State returns seven position starters and seven pitchers from last season's 33-23 squad, earning the No. 31 spot in the *Collegiate Baseball Newspaper's* Top-40 Preseason Poll. Leading the way for the veteran-laden Bears will be returning all-MVC performers

Kevin Medrano, Brock Chaffin, Nick Petree and Luke Voit. Chaffin (1B) led the Bears with a .344 average and a .550 slugging percentage, while Medrano (2B) hit .325 with 13 stolen bases. Senior Brent Seifert (3B) is the Bears' top returner in RBI (43), doubles (16) and home runs (9). The Missouri State pitching staff returns the reigning MVC Freshman of the Year in right-handed Nick Petree, who posted a 9-2 mark with a 2.81 ERA. Also back on the mound are Pierce Johnson (6-5, 4.76 ERA, 72 K) and Grant Gordon (3-6, 3.93 ERA, 49 K).



Creighton brings back seven starters and several talented pitchers from last year's 45-16 squad, which won both the regular-season and State Farm MVC Baseball championship titles. Returning to the mound for the Bluejays is junior ace Ty Blach (10-3, 2.65 ERA), senior closer Kurt Spomer, who tied for the lead league with 13 saves in 2011, and senior Reese McGraw (6-1, 3.00 ERA, 34 K, 5 saves), another top bullpen pitcher. Consistently one of the nation's leaders in fielding percentage, Creighton returns 75-percent of its infield, in Alex Staehely (.285, 65 H, 23 2B, 36 RBI), Nick Judkins (.227, 50 H, 42 R, 9 2B) and Chance Ross (.218, 47 H, 23 RBI), while senior Anthony Bemboom

2012 Preseason Poll

RANK	TEAM (1ST-PLACE VOTES)	POINTS
1.	Missouri State (5)	60
2.	Creighton (3)	53
3.	Wichita State	47
4.	Indiana State	37
5.	Illinois State	34
6.	Southern Illinois	31
7.	Bradley	15
8.	Evansville	11

(.233, 40 H, 5 2B, 4 HR, 23 RBI) will start at the catching position. Sophomore Mike Gerber (.280, 47 H, 8 2B, 7 HR, 23 RBI), a second team all-MVC pick in 2011, will anchor the Jays' outfield.

Wichita State returns six starters and 19 letterwinners from a 2011 squad that went 39-26 and finished second in the league standings. The Shocker pitching staff returns nine pitchers from the 2011 staff that posted a 3.27 ERA, including senior Josh Smith (7-4, 3.00 ERA) and sophomore Cale Elam (4-1, 1.23 ERA, 4 saves), who was a Freshman All-America selection last season. The Shockers entire outfield remains intact, as Don Lambert (.259, 17 2B, 5 3B, 30 RBP), Kevin Hall (.254, 65 H, 13 2B, 56 R) and Micah Green (.241, 35 H, 23 RBI) return to the lineup. First team all-Valley selection Johnny Coy (.274, 71 H, 59 RBI), returns to the Shocker lineup at first base. Junior Walker Davidson (.246, 46 H, 25 RBI) and sophomore Tyler Coughenour (.259, 45 H, 24 R), are also back on the Wichita State infield.



Indiana State returns a veteran squad for the 2012 season, with all nine position starters back on the field for the Sycamores, a team that finished 29-28 last season, and made a strong run in the State Farm MVC Tournament. The Sycamores welcome back four players that hit above .300 last season, and will be led by a trio of



2012 MVC PRESEASON ALL-CONFERENCE TEAM

PLAYER, TEAM	POS.	B/T	YR.	HOMETOWN (PREVIOUS SCHOOL)
Chris Serritella, Southern Illinois	1B	L/R	Jr.	Glenview, Ill. (Loyola Academy)
Kevin Medrano, Missouri State	2B	L/R	Sr.	Lee's Summit, Mo. (Lee's Summit North)
Koby Kraemer, Indiana State	3B	R/R	Jr.	Terre Haute, Ind. (South Vigo)
Eric Stamets, Evansville	SS	R/R	Jr.	Dublin, Ohio (Dublin Scioto)
Jeremy Lucas, Indiana State	C	R/R	Jr.	West Terre Haute, Ind. (West Vigo)
Mike Hollenbeck, Illinois State	DH	L/R	So.	Joliet, Ill. (Joliet Township)
Anthony Bemboom, Creighton	UT	L/R	Sr.	Sauk Rapids, Minn. (Sauk Rapids)
Mike Gerber, Creighton	OF	L/R	So.	Naperville, Ill. (Neuqua Valley)
Robby Ort, Indiana State	OF	L/R	Jr.	Newburgh, Ind. (Castle)
Jordan Sivertsen, Southern Illinois	OF	R/R	Sr.	Richmond, Ill. (Carmel Catholic)
Mike Tauchman, Bradley	OF	L/L	Jr.	Palatine, Ill. (William Fremd)
Ty Blach, Creighton	SP	R/L	Jr.	Centennial, Colo. (Regis Jesuit)
Nick Petree, Missouri State	SP	R/R	So.	Clinton, Mo. (Clinton)
Kenny Long, Illinois State	RP	L/L	Sr.	Fox River Grove, Ill. (Dundee Crown)
Kurt Spomer, Creighton	RP	S/R	Sr.	Honey Creek, Iowa (Tri-Center)

2011 FINAL MVC STANDINGS

	Missouri Valley Conference			Overall Records		
	W	L	Pct.	W	L	Pct.
Creighton	15	6	.714	45	16	.738
Wichita State	14	7	.667	39	26	.600
Illinois State	13	8	.619	36	18	.667
Missouri State	11	9	.550	33	23	.589
Southern Illinois	11	10	.524	23	34	.404
Indiana State	8	13	.381	29	28	.509
Evansville	7	13	.350	28	25	.528
Bradley	4	17	.190	22	32	.407

talented juniors in Robby Ort, Jeremy Lucas and Koby Kraemer. Ort, a first team all-MVC outfielder, led the Sycamores in runs (56), triples (7), home runs (10) and RBI (53), while Kraemer is the top returner in hits (75), doubles (14) and stolen bases (9). Lucas, a second team all-Valley selection at catcher, brings a .333 average and .423 OBP back to the Indiana State lineup. Sophomore Sean Manaea (5-5, 4.32 ERA, 82 K, .241 Opp. BA) will lead the way on the mound for Indiana State, with Reggie Hochstedler (4-1, 3.38 ERA, 53 K) and Chris Machado (5-3, 4.66 ERA, 35 K) also returning to the hill for the Sycamores.



Illinois State returns five starters and 19 letterwinners from last season's 36-18 squad that finished third in the league standings. The Redbirds will be led offensively by senior Kevin Tokarski, an honorable mention all-MVC selection a season ago, who is the top returner in hits (58) and runs (47), while batting .282. Mike Hollenbeck (.265, 43 H, 42 RBI, 12 2B) and Chad Hinshaw (.244, 48 H, 31 SB) also return to the Illinois State lineup. On the mound, shutdown closer Kenny Long (4-1, 0.92 ERA, 45 K, 6 saves) will be back in business, while Justin Hauer (3-0, 1.41 ERA, 41 K), Ryan Camp (3-2, 3.33 ERA) and Brad Sorkin (4-2, 4.27 ERA) also return for the Redbirds.

Southern Illinois returns an experienced group of players including eight position starters and two starting pitchers from last year's squad that won 23 contests. The Salukis welcome back Chris Serritella, who was sidelined in 2011 with a wrist injury, but finished in the top five in the league in eight offensive categories in



2010. Senior Jordan Sivertsen (OF) earned second team all-MVC honors after leading the team with a .302 average, nine home runs and 48 RBIs. On the mound, junior Cody Forsythe returns from a breakout season in which the lefty was named first team all-MVC after compiling an 8-5 record with a 2.35 ERA. He will be joined by Cameron Maldonado, who tied with Forsythe for the team lead with 69 strikeouts, and finished the season with five victories.

Bradley welcomes back seven position starters and eight pitchers from its 2011 team, led offensively by junior outfielder Mike Tauchman, a second team all-MVC pick a season ago, and the



Braves returning leader in batting average (.343), RBI (32) and a .463 OBP. Junior Jason Leblebajian (.315, 64 H, 14 2B, 28 R) and senior Rob Elliott (.276, 49 R, 58 H, 3 3B, 28 SB) also return to the Bradley lineup. The veteran pitching staff will be led by seniors Joe Bircher, (6-6, 3.00 ERA, 71 K, 3 CG) a second team all-MVC pick in 2011, Jacob Booden (3-0, 5.36 ERA, 33 K), Tony Doerr (2-4, 4.14 ERA, 31 K) and John Nasshan (3-8, 4.55 ERA, 41 K). Junior Justin Ziegler returns as the Braves closer after setting the single-season record with eight saves in 2011.



Evansville took the biggest hit from graduation last season, as the Purple Aces return just two position starters to their lineup. The middle of the infield will provide the offensive punch for Evansville, as both Trent Copeland (2B) and Eric Stamets (SS) return to the field. Copeland, a second team all-Valley selection in 2011, hit .308 with 17 doubles, 22 RBI and a .412 OBP. Stamets, one of the league's top base stealing threats, hit .292 with 51 runs, 13 doubles, 21 RBI and 27 SB last season. Evansville returns two starting pitchers, in Cole Isom (5-6, 4.76 ERA, 38 K) and Kyle Lloyd (4-6, 4.93 ERA, 45 K).

All eight Missouri Valley Conference baseball teams begin action the third week of February, with tournament play and non-conference games, while league battles will heat up starting Friday, March 23.

Opening Weekend Schedule

	Opponent	Site	Time	
Fri., Feb. 17	Virginia Tech at Bradley	Kennesaw, Ga.	11 AM	
	Tennessee Tech at Missouri State	Lubbock, Texas	12 PM	
	Indiana State at Southeastern Louisiana	Hammond, La.	1 PM	
	Bradley at Kennesaw State	Kennesaw, Ga.	3 PM	
	Creighton at Central Arkansas	Conway, Ark.	3 PM	
	Illinois State at Austin Peay	Clarksville, Tenn.	3 PM	
	Evansville at Belmont	Nashville, Tenn.	4 PM	
	Missouri State at Texas Tech	Lubbock, Texas	4 PM	
	Southern Illinois at North Florida	Jacksonville, Fla.	5 PM	
	Wichita State at Louisiana-Lafayette	San Marcos, Texas	6 PM	
	Sat., Feb. 18	Virginia Tech at Bradley	Kennesaw, Ga.	11 AM
		Evansville at Lipscomb	Nashville, Tenn.	12 PM
		Illinois State at Austin Peay	Clarksville, Tenn.	12 PM
		Southern Illinois at North Florida	Jacksonville, Fla.	12 PM
Tennessee Tech at Missouri State		Lubbock, Texas	12 PM	
Indiana State at Southeastern Louisiana		Hammond, La.	2 PM	
Texas State at Wichita State		San Marcos, Texas	2 PM	
Sun., Feb. 19	Creighton at Central Arkansas	Conway, Ark.	2 PM	
	Illinois State at Austin Peay	Clarksville, Tenn.	3:30 PM	
	Bradley at Kennesaw State	Kennesaw, Ga.	10 AM	
	Wichita State at Santa Clara	San Marcos, Texas	11 AM	
	Southern Illinois at North Florida	Jacksonville, Fla.	12 PM	
	Illinois State at Austin Peay	Clarksville, Tenn.	12 PM	
	Evansville at Middle Tennessee	Murfreesboro, Tenn.	1 PM	
	Creighton at Central Arkansas	Conway, Ark.	1 PM	
Indiana State at Southeastern Louisiana	Hammond, La.	1 PM		
Missouri State at Texas Tech	Lubbock, Texas	2 PM		