



2017 HORIZON LEAGUE BASEBALL PRESEASON POLL

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MILWAUKEE | NORTHERN KENTUCKY | OAKLAND | UIC | VALPARAISO | WRIGHT STATE | YOUNGSTOWN STATE

INDIANAPOLIS (February 14, 2017) -- Wright State, under the direction of first-year head coach Jeff Mercer, has been selected as the Horizon League baseball preseason favorite by a vote of the league's head coaches. The Raiders received six of a possible seven first-place votes and 47 of a possible 49 points. This is the third consecutive season that Wright State has been tabbed as the preseason favorite.

UIC picked up 40 points and a first-place vote to finish second in the preseason balloting, while Milwaukee finished third in the poll with 36 points. Valparaiso checked in at No. 4 in the coaches' vote with 27 points. Northern Kentucky (22), Oakland and Youngstown State rounded out the poll.

The Raiders return three second team all-league performers in pitchers Caleb Sampen - the 2016 Horizon League Freshman of the Year - and Trevor Swaney as well as outfielder Peyton Burdick. Wright State has reached back-to-back NCAA Regional Finals and owns a 69-18 (.793) Horizon League record over the past three seasons.

Sampen posted a 9-4 record with a 2.76 ERA in 15 appearances in 2016. The sophomore right-hander tossed two complete games and allowed just 75 hits in 94.2 innings of work. Swaney, a redshirt senior, sported a 3.00 ERA and was 9-2 a season ago, allowing just nine walks in 72 innings. Burdick hit .289 with 14 doubles and 44 runs scored during his freshman season.

Also returning for the Raiders is sophomore outfielder J.D. Orr, who led the team with a .346 average and also scored 41 runs while earning a spot on the league's all-freshman squad.

UIC welcomes back a pair of first-team all-Horizon League players in second baseman David Cronin and first baseman Ricardo Ramirez. Cronin finished third in the Horizon League with a .360 average in 2016 with 33 runs scored. Ramirez led the Flames with 43 runs batted in and six home runs. UIC also returns Alex Dee, a second-team and all-freshman performer who hit .300 with 31 RBI in 2016.

2016 Horizon League Player of the Year Dalton Varsho is back for Milwaukee after pacing the league with a .381 average, six triples and a 1.057 OPS. The junior catcher also led the conference in hits (88), slugging percentage (.610) and total bases (141). He was successful in 16 of his 17 stolen base attempts while throwing out 20 would-be base stealers.

The Panthers also return second baseman and second-team all-conference player Billy Quirke who finished third on the team in batting and scored 44 runs.

Valparaiso first baseman Nate Palace was a second-team all-Horizon League player a year ago and returns for his senior season. Palace hit six home runs and drove in 40 for the Crusaders, who also return a pair of all-freshman honorees in infielders Chase Dawson and Sam Shaikin.

Utility player Trey Ganns earned second-team honors last season and will lead Northern Kentucky. Ganns struck out 45 batters in 47 innings of work on the mound and hit .286 with 17 doubles last season. Also back for the Norse is sophomore Will Haueter who finished second on the 2016 squad with a .329 average while tying for the league lead with 18 doubles during his all-freshman team campaign.

Oakland third baseman Ben Hart hit .323 in league action last season, was a second-team all-conference choice and will anchor a group of returnees that features all-freshman team member Ryan Fitzgerald.

Youngstown State welcomes back sophomore Kyle Benyo, an all-freshman team selection in 2016.

The regular season begins Friday, February 14, and the 2017 Horizon League Baseball Championship will be held May 24-27 at the home field of the highest seed that meets facility requirements.

2017 Horizon League Baseball Preseason Poll

Team	Pts. (1st)
1. Wright State	47 (6)
2. UIC	40 (1)
3. Milwaukee	36
4. Valparaiso	27
5. Northern Kentucky	22
6. Oakland	16
7. Youngstown State	8

HORIZON LEAGUE BASEBALL PRESEASON POLL HISTORY

2016		Points (1st)	2010		Points (1st)	2004		Points (1st)
1.	Wright State	36 (6)	1.	Wright State	36 (6)	1.	UIC	36 (6)
2.	UIC	27 (1)	2.	UIC	31 (1)	2.	Milwaukee	30 (1)
3.	Valparaiso	25	3.	Milwaukee	24	3.	Youngstown State	26 (3)
4.	Milwaukee	24	4.	Valparaiso	22	4.	Butler	22
5.	Youngstown State	15	5.	Youngstown State	15	5.	Wright State	12
T6.	Northern Kentucky	13	6.	Cleveland State	12	6.	Cleveland State	11
T6.	Oakland	7	7.	Butler	7	7.	Detroit	10
2015		Points (1st)	2009		Points (1st)	2003		Points (1st)
1.	Wright State	35 (5)	1.	UIC	36 (6)	1.	Milwaukee	34 (4)
2.	UIC	28	2.	Wright State	29 (1)	2.	UIC	33 (3)
3.	Milwaukee	23 (1)	3.	Milwaukee	26	3.	Youngstown State	
4.	Valparaiso	19	4.	Youngstown State	21	4.	Butler	
5.	Youngstown State	12	5.	Valparaiso	15	5.	Cleveland State	
6.	Oakland	9	6.	Cleveland State	14	6.	Wright State	
			7.	Butler	6	7.	Detroit	
2014		Points (1st)	2008		Points (1st)	2002		Points (1st)
1.	Milwaukee	33 (3)	1.	Wright State	34 (4)	1.	Milwaukee	34 (4)
2.	UIC	28 (1)	2.	UIC	32 (3)	2.	UIC	31 (2)
3.	Wright State	27 (2)	3.	Milwaukee	25	3.	Wright State	25 (1)
4.	Valparaiso	19	4.	Butler	17	4.	Butler	20
5.	Oakland	11	5.	Youngstown State	14	5.	Cleveland State	19
6.	Youngstown State	8	6.	Cleveland State	13	6.	Youngstown State	11
			7.	Valparaiso	12	7.	Detroit	7
2013		Points (1st)	2007		Points (1st)	2001 (MCC)		Points (1st)
1.	Valparaiso	(3)	1.	UIC	24 (4)	1.	Milwaukee	23 (3)
2.	Milwaukee	(2)	2.	Wright State	21 (2)	2.	UIC	22 (3)
3.	Wright State		3.	Milwaukee	16	3.	Butler	16
4.	UIC		4.	Butler	14	4.	Cleveland State	14
5.	Youngstown State		5.	Youngstown State	10	5.	Wright State	9
			6.	Cleveland State	5	6.	Detroit	6
2012		Points (1st)	2006		Points (1st)	2000 (MCC)		
1.	Wright State	25 (5)	1.	UIC	25 (5)	T1.	Butler	
2.	UIC	19 (1)	2.	Milwaukee	19	T1.	Milwaukee	
3.	Valparaiso	16	3.	Youngstown State	17 (1)	3.	UIC	
4.	Milwaukee	15	4.	Wright State	14	4.	Cleveland State	
5.	Butler	13	5.	Butler	10	5.	Wright State	
6.	Youngstown State	10	6.	Cleveland State	5	6.	Detroit	
2011		Points (1st)	2005		Points (1st)			
1.	Wright State	32 (3)	1.	UIC	25 (5)			
2.	Milwaukee	31 (3)	2.	Milwaukee	17			
3.	UIC	27 (1)	3.	Youngstown State	15 (1)			
4.	Valparaiso	24	4.	Butler	14			
T5.	Butler	13	5.	Cleveland State	12			
T5.	Youngstown State	13	6.	Wright State	7			
7.	Cleveland State	7						