HORIZON LEAGUE ®

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Cleveland State
University

University of
Detroit Mercy

University of
Illinois at Chicago

Northern Kentucky
University

Oakland
University

Valparaiso
University

University of
Wisconsin-Green Bay

University of
Wisconsin-Milwaukee

Wright State
University

Youngstown State
University

Valparaiso Tabbed Horizon League Favorite; Felder Voted Player of the Year in Preseason Poll

Felder is HL's top returner in points, assists and steals

INDIANAPOLIS -- After winning the Horizon League regular season and tournament titles last season, Valparaiso has been voted to repeat as the Crusaders are the preseason favorite to capture the 2015-16 Horizon League men's basketball championship. Oakland's **Kahlil Felder** (Detroit, Mich./Pershing) was tabbed the Preseason Player of the Year in voting by the League's coaches, media and sports information directors.

Felder was the only player in the country to average at least 17.0 points and 7.0 assists per game last season after ranking second in the HL in scoring (18.1) and leading the League in assists (7.6). Felder is the HL's top returning player in the 2015-16 season in three major stat categories: points, assists and steals (66 last year).

Valparaiso captured 36 of the 43 first-place votes cast to finish with 418 total points and claim first place in the poll. The Crusaders return almost 99 percent of their scoring and rebounding from last season that won a school record 28 games. Four Valpo players were named to the preseason All-League teams, led by forward **Alec Peters**, a First-Team All-League selection last year after averaging 16.8 points and 6.7 rebounds per game and will start his junior campaign as a preseason first-team selection for the second-consecutive season.

Joining Felder and Peters on the preseason first team are Milwaukee's **Matt Tiby**, **Paris Bass** of Detroit, and Green Bay's **Jordan Fouse**.

Tiby was a Second-Team All-League selection after putting up 13.3 points and 7.8 rebounds per game last season. He has started all 65 games in his Milwaukee career and enters his senior season having scored in double figures in 21 consecutive outings. Bass was the Horizon League Freshman of the Year last year after pacing all rookies in the League with averages of 12.4 points and 5.7 rebounds per game. Fouse is not the scorer that the rest of his First-Team players are (7.5 points per game), but he does a little bit of everything on the floor as the three-time All-Defensive Team selection ranks in the top-three amongst returnees in the League this year in rebounding (7.1), assists (3.7), steals (64) and blocked shots (37).

The second team features four seniors and a sophomore and is highlighted by three selections from the preseason favorite, Valparaiso. The Crusaders are represented by seniors **Vashil Fernandez** and **Darien Walker** and sophomore **Tevonn Walker**. Joining the trio on the second team is Youngstown State's **Bobby Hain** and **JT Yoho** of Wright State.

2015-16 Preseason Poll

Rank	School (1st)	Points
1.	Valparaiso (36)	418
2.	Oakland (6)	368
3.	Milwaukee	344
4.	Detroit (1)	289
5.	Wright State	253
6.	Green Bay	215
7.	Cleveland State	173
8.	UIC	125
9.	Youngstown State	93
10.	Northern Kentucky	87

PLAYER OF THE YEAR
Kahlil Felder, Oakland

FIRST TEAM ALL-LEAGUE
Kahlil Felder, G, Jr. ....Oakland
  2014 Freshman of the Year
  2015 First Team All-League,
  18.1 ppg, 7.6 apg, 82.6 FT%
Alec Peters, F, Jr. ....Valparaiso
  2015 First Team All-League
  16.8 ppg, 6.7 rpg, 48.9 FG%, 46.6 3pt FG%
Matt Tiby, F, Sr. ....Milwaukee
  2015 Second Team All-League
  13.3 ppg, 7.8 rpg, 81.2 FT%
Paris Bass, G/F, So. ....Detroit
  2015 Freshman of the Year
  12.4 ppg, 5.7 rpg, 39 steals, 35 blocks
Jordan Fouse, F, Sr. ....Green Bay
  2013, 2014 & 2015 All-Defensive Team
  7.1 rpg, 3.7 apg, 64 steals, 37 blocks

SECOND TEAM ALL-LEAGUE
Bobby Hain, C., Sr. ....Youngstown State
  14.6 ppg, 7.4 rpg, 51.4 FG%
JT Yoho, F, Sr. .... Wright State
  15.6 ppg, 6.4 rpg, missed most of 2nd half of
  season las year due to injury
Vashil Fernandez, C, Sr. ....Valparaiso
  2015 Defensive Player of the Year
  98 blocks, 2.9 per game, 5.9 rpg, 56.4 FG%
Tevonn Walker, G, So. ....Valparaiso
  2015 All-Freshman Team
  10.3 ppg, 3.4 rpg, led team with 37 steals
Darien Walker, G, Sr., ...Valparaiso
  10.7 ppg, 4.6 rpg

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Fernandez was the Horizon League's Defensive Player of the Year after setting a Valparaiso record for single-season blocks with 98. His 98 blocks were more than double the amount any other player had in the HL last season and ranked 11th in the nation. Darien Walker ranked second on the Crusaders in scoring last season, averaged 10.7 points and third on the team in rebounding, 4.6 per game. Tevonn Walker was an All-Freshman team selection last season after starting 33 of 34 games played in his first season with Valpo. He averaged 10.3 points and 3.4 rebounds per game and led Valpo with 37 steals. YSU's Hain is one of the top offensive returnees in the HL as he ranks in the top-four in the League amongst returnees in points (3rd - 13.3), rebounding (2nd - 7.4) and field goal percentage (51.4% - 4th). With 1,026 career points he has also scored the most points of any active player in the Horizon League. Yoho entered the Cleveland State game on Jan. 14 last season ranking in the top-five in the HL in scoring with a 16.9 per game average and rebounding at 6.9 per game, but an injury in that game against the Vikings kept him out of 12 of the last 13 games of the season.

Coming in second in the preseason poll with 368 total points and six first-place votes is Oakland. In addition to Felder, the Golden Grizzlies also have two other starters back in sophomore forward **Jalen Hayes** (All-Freshman team selection last season) and senior forward Tommie McCune. Fellow All-Freshman team selection Nick Daniels also returns for Oakland which led the HL in scoring (74.2 points per game) last season.

Milwaukee is third in the preseason poll after ending last season on a tear as the Panthers won seven of its last nine games. UWM returns four of five starters and nine letterwinners overall from last year's team which went 9-7 in Horizon League play to finish fourth in the regular season. In addition to Tiby, UWM will also welcome back **Austin Arians**, who redshirted last season, but averaged 11.1 points per game in 2013-14 when the Panthers won the Horizon League tournament.

In fourth place in the poll is Detroit which garnered one first place vote. The Titans return Bass and two other starters (juniors Matthew Grant and Jarod Williams) from last year's team. Also back is senior sharpshooter **Anton Wilson**, a starter in 16 of 33 games last season, and connected on 56 three-point field goals.

Injuries wrecked Wright State's season last year as only three Raiders played in all 31 of the team's games last season, but the injuries mean WSU returns one of the most experienced and deep lineups in the HL this year. The preseason pick to finish fifth in the League is led by sophomore guard **Grant Benzinger**, an All-Freshman team selection last year after making 59 three-point field goals and senior guard **Joe Thomasson** (10.0 ppg, 5.5 rpg and 3.2 apg).

In addition to losing two-time Player of the Year Keifer Sykes to graduation, Green Bay is also welcoming a new Head Coach as **Linc Darner**, fresh off a Division II National Championship with Florida Southern takes over the program. The cupboard is not bare for Darner as in addition to Fouse, he also has back senior guard **Carrington Love**. Love averaged 10.0 points per game last season and also ranked among League leaders with 101 assists and 52 steals.

In seventh in the preseason poll is Cleveland State. The Vikings lost both its First-Team All-League selections and top four scorers from a year ago, but do return junior guard **Andre Yates**. Yates is CSU's top returning scorer from last year after averaging 6.1 points per game in a role where he did not get nearly as much opportunities to score as he will this season.

UIC is eighth in the poll and has an equal mix of returnees (7) and newcomers (7) for new head coach **Steve McClain**. The Flames top returning scorer is senior guard **Paris Burns** at 10.4 points per game last year. Also back for the Flames is sophomore forward **Tai Odiase**. Odiase ranked second in the HL last season with 48 blocks.

Youngstown State is ninth in the preseason poll as the Penguins return only one starter, Hain, from last year's team. The Penguins welcome a League-high nine newcomers to the team this year.

Rounding out the poll is Horizon League newcomer Northern Kentucky. In addition to being new to the League, the Norse also have a first-year head coach as **John Brannen** took over the program in April. Brannen welcomes back 61% of the scoring from last season, including senior forward **Jalen Billups**, who averaged 11.1 points and 5.9 rebounds per game for NKU last year.

The regular season will start on Friday, Nov. 13, with six teams in action. Horizon League play begins on Saturday, Jan. 2, with five games as all 10 teams begin League play that day.

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About the Horizon League *The Horizon League is an NCAA Division I athletics conference comprised of 10 member institutions located*

Cleveland State University

throughout the Midwest's major metropolitan cities. Headquartered in Indianapolis, the League and its members strive to be highly competitive athletically while committing to the total development of its student-athletes and creating a lasting impact on campus and in the community.

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