

NAIA PREVIEW

By CHUCK MISTOVICH, *Basketball Times*

TOP 10

- 1 ▶ **Georgetown (Ky.)**
- 2 ▶ **Robert Morris (Ill.)**
- 3 ▶ **Mountain State (W.Va.)**
- 4 ▶ **Lee (Tenn.)**
- 5 ▶ **Oklahoma Baptist**
- 6 ▶ **California Baptist**
- 7 ▶ **Campbellsville (Ky.)**
- 8 ▶ **Oklahoma City**
- 9 ▶ **LSU-Shreveport**
- 10 ▶ **Rogers State (Okla.)**

ALL-AMERICA TEAM

FIRST TEAM

- ▶ **Zach Allender**, Campbellsville (Ky.)
- ▶ **Demetrius Guions**, Georgetown (Ky.)
- ▶ **Jon Meriweather**, Park (Mo.)
- ▶ **Eric Palm**, McKendree (Ill.)
- ▶ **Mark Roussin**, California Baptist

SECOND TEAM

- ▶ **Rodney Alexander**, Oklahoma City
- ▶ **Tyrone Hamilton**, LSU-Shreveport
- ▶ **Bo Harris**, Mountain State (W. Va.)
- ▶ **Brent Jones**, Oklahoma Baptist
- ▶ **DeAndre Thomas**, Robert Morris (Ill.)

HONORABLE MENTION

- Curtis Allen**, Lewis-Clark State (Idaho)
- Craig Austin**, Point Loma Nazarene (Calif.)
- Czyz Bennett**, Texas College
- Chris Berry**, Texas Wesleyan
- Brandon Bishop**, Missouri Baptist
- Charles Bronson**, Pikeville (Ky.)
- Brandon Brown**, Northwestern Oklahoma St.
- Nate Brumfield**, Oklahoma Baptist
- Jeremy Cable**, Tougaloo (Miss.)
- Jackson Capel**, Evangel (Mo.)
- Damien Chisholm**, Paul Quinn (Texas)
- Paco Diaw**, Lee (Tenn.)
- Dane Dmitrovic**, Texas Wesleyan
- Shaun Dumas**, Xavier (La.)
- Brandon Durham**, Southern Nazarene (Okla.)
- Luke Fitzgerald**, Cumberland (Tenn.)
- Danny Hawkins**, MidAmerica Nazarene (Kan.)
- Eric Hobbie**, McKendree (Ill.)
- Tedrick Hudson**, Emmanuel (Ga.)
- Kelvin Johnson**, Illinois-Springfield
- Robert Jones**, Mobile (Ala.)
- Elmar Kuli-Zade**, Lee (Tenn.)
- Brian Lake**, Union (Tenn.)
- Brandon Mims**, LSU-Shreveport
- Nate Minnoy**, Lee (Tenn.)
- Matt Neaville**, Union (Tenn.)
- Tim Nelson**, Univ. of Science and Arts of Okla.
- Roderick Rodgers**, Rogers State (Okla.)
- Julian Scott**, Saint Xavier (Ill.)
- Kip Small**, Auburn-Montgomery (Ala.)
- Denny Stosich**, Westminster (Utah)
- Chase Sukut**, Rocky Mountain (Mont.)
- Jason Taylor**, Oklahoma Christian
- Terrance Worthy**, Concordia (Calif.)
- Ryan Zamroz**, The Master's (Calif.)

1. Georgetown

Georgetown has some unfinished business to take care of. Last year, the Tigers went undefeated through the regular season but were an upset victim early in the NAIA Tournament. Coach Happy Osborne returns seven lettermen from that 35-1 team plus three high-profile transfers and a medical redshirt.

All-American Demetrius Guions is the headliner after averaging 15.1 points and 7.1 rebounds per game last year. Other key veterans are 5-11 Jerry Turner (7.7 ppg), 6-4 David Graham (12.7 ppg, 4.5 rpg) and 6-3 Kyle Saxton (7.0 ppg).

Among the four Division I transfers are quick-fix talents Zach Berry from Kennesaw State and Matt Walls of Marshall.

Osborne says he may need more depth inside, but that high-scoring offense (91.6 ppg) and stingy defense (68.4) from last year should again click during a potential championship run.

2. Robert Morris

No one has more talent in the lineup than the Eagles, so a finish that's better than last year's 28-4 season is well within range. Five players who started much of last season return, including 6-0 Andre White (15.3 ppg), 6-1 Terry Dunlap (10.5 ppg, 4.8 rpg) and 6-0 Jason Bowden (9.2 ppg), along with four others who averaged more than 5.3 points a contest.

But the major impact player for coach Al Bruehl is 6-8, 285-pound DeAndre Thomas, who played at Indiana last year and should be one of the top NAIA players this season.

3. Mountain State

Rarely does coach Bob Bolen have more than a starter or two returning, and the Cougars are still always among the best in the NAIA. Bolen's 2004 team won it all and two others finished as runner-up over the last six years.

But Bolen has his work cut out for him this year. No starters return from a team that went 34-3 and appeared in the NAIA championship game last season.

The Cougars will field a team of promising transfers again this year, headlined by 6-7 Bo Harris, who won NAIA All-America honors at Pikeville (Ky.), and junior-college star 6-1 Marcus Hunter, who averaged 24.3 points a game last year at St. Petersburg (Fla.) College.

4. Lee

At least a repeat of the 2007-08 season is expected for the Flames, as four starters return from a 33-2

team. The top veterans are 5-9 Elmar Kuli-Zade (12.1 ppg, 3.6 apg), 6-6 Paco Diaw (7.6 ppg), 6-8 Harold Griffin (8.8 ppg, 5.6 rpg) and 6-6 Joe Fulp (6.5, 4.5).

Coach Tommy Brown fills any holes in his lineup with three Division I transfers, led by 6-3, 260-pound Nate Minnoy, who averaged eight points a game in stints at Purdue and Central Michigan.

5. Oklahoma Baptist

Oklahoma Baptist is a major challenger of fellow Sooner Conference rival Oklahoma City, the defending two-time NAIA champion. Four Bison starters return from last year's 24-10 team that reached the NAIA Elite Eight for the sixth time in the last eight seasons.

Coach Doug Tolin features veterans in 6-0 Brent Jones (16.3 ppg, 3.8 apg), 6-10 Charles Carter (4.5 ppg, 5.1 rpg, 2.6 pg), 6-5 Aaron Perez (8.4 ppg, 5.8 rpg) and 6-1 Justin Williams (7.7 ppg).

Only two players are gone from last season. In addition, four transfers join the team, including 6-5 Nate Brumfield, who last played at NCAA Division I Weber State.

6. California Baptist

Last year's 24-9 finish was the second best in the school's history, but that was just a warmup for this season. California Baptist returns four starters and 10 lettermen. The go-to guy is NAIA All-American Mark Roussin, who averaged 17.5 points, 8.1 rebounds and 2.2 steals per game last year.

Other key returnees are 6-2 Dave Cernin (10.2 ppg) and 6-7 Matt Gonzales (10.6 ppg, 5.5 rpg), along with 5-10 Marquis Kennedy and 6-5 Davey Hopkins, who combined for 13.1 points a contest last season.

7. Campbellsville

All-American Zach Allender headlines the return of six veterans from last year's 26-10 team that reached the NAIA Tournament Final Four. Allender sat out last season after knee surgery, but he'll suit up this year and is expected to put up averages close to his 20 points and nine rebounds a game two seasons ago.

Coach Keith Adkins also brought in a ton of fresh talent. The best of the five transfers will likely be 6-3 Aaron Wyatt, who averaged 18.3 points a game at Division II Georgia Southwestern State last year.

8. Oklahoma City

Everything seems to be new at the home of the two-time NAIA defending national champions.

The team is green, and so is the coach. Tommy Wade has been elevated to head man after assisting Ray Harper (now an assistant at Western Kentucky) for the last nine years, which included two straight NAIA titles and several more at NCAA Division II Kentucky Wesleyan.

The lone returning starter from last year's 31-7 team is 6-8 Na'Vonta Kentle (4.6 ppg, 3.4 rpg), as 84.5 percent of the scoring has departed. Not to worry. Wade has brought in four transfers and welcomes back two redshirt players.

The star Division I transfers are 6-7 Rodney Alexander, a part-time starter at Illinois, and 6-10 Ricardo DeBem from Texas Tech.

9. LSU-Shreveport

The Pilots won 31 games last year but little is left from that team. The one returning starter is 6-1 Jared Stevenson (6.9 ppg, 2.6 apg). Three others return after seeing plenty of action last year. Coach Chad McDowell had another great recruiting year. Four Division I transfers should make a big-time impact on the program, including 6-0 Tyrone Hamilton (16.0 ppg) from Centenary and 6-8 Brandon Mims from Louisiana Tech.

10. Rogers State

The third top-10 team from the tough Sooner Conference may be the most talented. Rogers State returns all but one player from last year's 20-11 group. Coach Wren Baker's squad held foes to 65.5 points a game last year, and not much should change in the new season. Starting experience returns with 6-6 Sylvester Spicer (11.4 ppg, 5.1 rpg), 6-5 Roderick Rodgers (12.5, 5.9), 6-4 Eric Young (10.1, 5.2), 6-2 Aldric Reynolds (8.4 ppg) and 6-9 Abram Donlon (7.8 ppg, 6.3 rpg).

POSSIBLE BREAKTHROUGHS

Auburn-Montgomery (19-9), Azusa Pacific (24-11), Carroll (23-9), Central Methodist (20-12), Columbia (25-9), Concordia (28-5), Evangel (28-7), Faulkner (17-15), Illinois-Springfield (22-10), Lambuth (29-5), Lewis-Clark State (22-10), Martin Methodist (26-7), McKendree (27-7), MidAmerica Nazarene (31-5), Mobile (22-10), Montana State-Northern (22-9), Northwestern Oklahoma State (18-11), Oklahoma Christian (13-17), Olivet Nazarene (17-15), Park (16-13), Pikeville (22-9), Point Loma Nazarene (24-10), Texas College (20-14), Texas Wesleyan (20-12), Union (18-13), University of Science and Arts of Oklahoma (17-16), Westminster (20-7), William Jewell (20-13).