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October 20, 2015

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Dayton Picked to Finish First In 2015-16 Men's Basketball

Flyers, Rhode Island, Davidson and George Washington Earn First Place Votes

BROOKLYN, N.Y.— Dayton has been picked as the 2015-16 Atlantic 10 Conference favorite in the league's annual men's basketball preseason poll. The conference announced the poll and preseason all-conference awards Tuesday in conjunction with its annual Media Day, held at Barclays Center. The awards and poll were chosen by a panel of the league's head coaches and select media members.

The Flyers, last year's championship runner-up, garnered 12 first-place votes and 352 points in the poll. Led by juniors Kendall Pollard and Scoochie Smith, Dayton finished 27-9 last year and tied for second in the A-10 at 13-5. Coach Archie Miller has led UD to five NCAA Tournament wins over the past two years.

Rhode Island, which tied Dayton for second in the Atlantic 10 last year, is just behind the Flyers in the 2015-16 Preseason Poll. The Rams totaled 347 points, including eight first-place votes. The junior tandem of E.C. Matthews and Hassan Martin, both of whom were selected for the Preseason All-Conference First Team, spurred Rhody to a 23-10 finish and NIT appearance last year.

Davidson, the 2014-15 A-10 regular season champion, is third in this season's poll with six first-place votes and 329 total points. Preseason first-team selection Jack Gibbs leads a core of returning players that finished 14-4 in the Atlantic 10 and 24-8 overall, earning the Wildcats' first-ever at-large bid to the NCAA Tournament.

George Washington garnered one first-place vote and 285 poll points to rank fourth, followed by 2015 A-10 Champion VCU, which had 277 points for fifth place. Richmond was sixth with 262 points and Saint Joseph's, the 2014 A-10 Champion, received 194 points to finish seventh in the voting.

St. Bonaventure (177 points), La Salle (164 points) and Massachusetts (142 points) finished eighth, ninth and 10th in the poll. Duquesne, Saint Louis, George Mason and Fordham rounded out the preseason rankings, respectively.

DeAndre' Bembry of Saint Joseph's and La Salle's Jordan Price join Gibbs, Martin and Matthews on the Preseason All-Conference First Team. Brian Sullivan of Davidson, Shevon Thompson from George Mason, St. Bonaventure's Marcus Posley and Patricio Garino and Kevin Larsen, both from George Washington were the five selected for the Preseason Second Team All-Conference.

Pollard, Richmond's Terry Allen and ShawnDre' Jones and VCU's Melvin Johnson and Mo Alie-Cox were all named to the Preseason All-Conference Third Team. Garino, Martin, Bembry, Alie-Cox were all joined by Fordham's Mandell Thomas on the Preseason All-Defensive Team.

The 2015-16 men's basketball season tips off on Friday, Nov. 13. Atlantic 10 Conference play begins the weekend of Jan. 2-3, with all seven games nationally televised. The season will culminate with the 2016 Atlantic 10 Men's Basketball Championship, which will be played at Brooklyn's Barclays Center for the fourth straight year. All 13 games of the five-day tournament will be nationally televised. The league's premiere event will begin Wednesday, March 9 and the league will crown its 2016 champion on March 13, Selection Sunday.

About the Atlantic 10 Conference

The Atlantic 10 Conference was founded in 1975 and consists of 14 diverse members across eight states and Washington, D.C. The mission of the Atlantic 10 is to provide an enhanced student-athlete experience through 21 nationally competitive championship sports. The basketball-centric conference is committed to integrity, educational excellence and providing quality equitable championship experiences for its student-athletes, coaches, and support staff. The membership consists of Davidson College, the University of Dayton, Duquesne University, Fordham University, George Mason University, The George Washington University, La Salle University, the University of

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Massachusetts, the University of Rhode Island, University of Richmond, St. Bonaventure University, Saint Joseph's University, Saint Louis University and Virginia Commonwealth University. For more information, visit www.atlantic10.com.