



VOLLEYBALL

2017 MVC VOLLEYBALL PRESEASON POLL

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MISSOURI STATE PICKED AS FAVORITE TO WIN MVC VOLLEYBALL TITLE

ST. LOUIS – Fresh off an MVC regular season championship and an at-large berth to the NCAA Tournament, Missouri State has been tabbed as the league favorite in the annual coaches' preseason poll, receiving 99 points and nine first-place votes. The Bears outdistanced second-place pick UNI (89 points, one first-place vote), third-place Illinois State (76 points) and fourth-place Loyola (67 points).

The Valley will look to continue to build off the success of another tremendous season in 2016 that saw three teams make the NCAA Tournament. It was the seventh time in league history at least three Valley teams made the NCAA field. The MVC was one of seven leagues to earn three or more bids, joining the Big Ten (8), Pac 12 (8), Big 12 (6), SEC (4), ACC (3), and Mountain West (3).

The foundation is in place as league teams return 38 starters and eight liberos (66-percent of starters), one AVCA All-American, five first team all-conference selections and another five players who earned second-team accolades.



Missouri State returns five starters, plus the libero, from a squad that finished 26-9 (16-2 MVC), surpassing the 20-win mark for the 17th time in 18 seasons. The Bears enter 2017 as the defending MVC regular season champion and return the majority of their statistical output from the 2016 squad, with 84 percent of kills, 86 percent of digs, 69 percent of blocks and 85 percent of aces back from last year's team. MSU outside hitter Lily Johnson is poised for a record-setting senior campaign. The two-time MVC Player of the Year and three-time AVCA All-American enters her final season 200 kills away from MSU's career record and 229 from the Valley mark. She is 39 attacks away from tying the MVC career record in that category, and needs one more MVC Player of the Week citation to tie another league record. MSU also returns first-team all-conference setter Daniele Messa after an impactful freshman

campaign. Messa averaged 10.41 assists per set, ranking third in The Valley a year ago.



UNI returns three starters, plus the libero, from a squad that finished 24-10 (14-4 MVC) and earned a spot in the NCAA Tournament for the 20th time in program history. UNI has posted 32-straight NCAA Division I winning seasons, which ranks as the sixth-longest active streak in the nation behind Hawaii (36), Nebraska (36), Penn State (36), Stanford (36) and UCLA (34). Junior outside hitter Bri Weber returns after earning first-team all-conference honors, averaging 2.89 kills and 3.19 digs per set as a sophomore. Senior setter Heather Hook and junior libero Kendyl Sorge were second-team all-conference honorees last fall. Hook led the MVC, averaging 10.99 assists per set, while Sorge ranked third in digs per set (5.09).



Illinois State welcomes back four starters and the libero, from its 2016 team that finished 17-15 (9-9 MVC). A new era of Illinois State volleyball begins in 2017 as Leah Johnson will become the seventh person to lead the Redbird volleyball team after coaching at SIUE the past six seasons. Illinois State returns a pair of first-team all-conference players in 2017 who have already made their mark in program history. Three-time All-MVC First-Team selection Jaelyn Keene is back for her senior year and junior Courtney Pence returns to the court after being named the Valley's Libero of the Year last fall. Keene led the MVC in hitting

2017 PRESEASON POLL

Rank	Team (1st-place votes)	Points
1.	Missouri State (9).....	99
2.	UNI (1).....	89
3.	Illinois State.....	76
4.	Loyola.....	67
5.	Southern Illinois.....	64
6.	Drake.....	48
7.	Valparaiso.....	33
8.	Bradley.....	32
9.	Indiana State.....	26
10.	Evansville.....	16

percentage (.396) and averaged 3.08 kills per set last fall, while Pence led the league with a 5.53 digs per set average.



Loyola brings back three starters, plus the libero, from a 14-18 (9-9 MVC) team that earned a spot in the MVC Tournament. The Ramblers welcome back several key pieces from last season, including second-team all-conference honoree Gabi Maciagowski. The junior outside hitter averaged 3.30 kills per set, a figure which ranked sixth in the MVC, while her 3.66 points per set sat eighth in the league. Maciagowski, who enters the 2017 campaign needing 400 kills to reach 1,000 for her career, was a key to Loyola's success last fall, with the team going 5-0 when she pounded out 20 or more kills. Head coach Chris Muscat also returns a pair of individuals who earned MVC All-Freshmen recognition in 2016 as outside hitter Quinn Spieker and setter Delilah Wolf look for strong sophomore seasons.

2017 MVC PRESEASON ALL-CONFERENCE TEAM

PLAYER, TEAM	POS.	CL.	HT.	HOMETOWN (HIGH SCHOOL)
Andrea Estrada, Southern Illinois	OH	Sr.	5-9	Bogota, Columbia (Colegio Santa Maria)
Lily Johnson, Missouri State	OH	Sr.	5-11	Wildwood, Mo. (Lafayette)
Jaelyn Keene, Illinois State	MB	Sr.	6-2	Jacksonville, Ill. (Jacksonville)
Gabi Maciagowski, Loyola	OH	Jr.	6-1	Toronto, Ontario (St. Joseph)
Daniele Messa, Missouri State	S	So.	5-7	Bartlett, Ill. (St. Francis)
Courtney Pence, Illinois State	DS	Jr.	5-8	Springfield, Ill. (Springfield)
Bri Weber, UNI	OH	Jr.	5-10	Dike, Iowa (Dike-New Hartford)



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2016 FINAL MVC STANDINGS

Missouri Valley Conference

	W	L	Pct.
Missouri State	16	2	.889
Wichita State	15	3	.833
Northern Iowa	14	4	.778
Southern Illinois	12	6	.667
Illinois State	9	9	.500
Loyola	9	9	.500
Drake	8	10	.444
Indiana State	4	14	.222
Bradley	2	16	.111
Evansville	1	17	.056

Overall Records

W	L	Pct.
26	9	.743
24	8	.750
24	10	.706
21	12	.636
17	15	.531
14	18	.438
17	15	.531
10	20	.333
7	22	.241
5	26	.161



Southern Illinois returns three starters from last season's team that finished 21-12 (12-6 MVC), earning a spot in the MVC tourney field for the fifth-straight season. First-year head coach Kari Thompson will face nine top-100 RPI teams from a year ago, including five that reached the NCAA Tournament. Senior outside hitter Andrea Estrada opens the 2017 season sitting at 1,101 kills and 1,034 digs for her career. The senior is one of just four Salukis to have both 1,000 career kills and 1,000 career digs and will most likely crack SIU's top-5 in each category by the end of her career, as she needs 274 kills and 80 digs to do so. Estrada earned second-team all-conference honors last season, averaging 2.89 kills and 3.19 digs per set.



Drake returns three starters and its libero from last year's squad that finished 17-15 (8-10 MVC), posting the program's best season since 2010. The Bulldogs return six student-athletes that made significant contributions in 2016, including senior and three-year starter Kyla Inderski. Last season, Inderski recorded 400 kills, the eighth most ever by a Bulldog in a season, for a 3.31 kills per set average. She enters this season with 1,044 career kills to rank seventh all-time in Drake history. She also ranks seventh all-time in digs at Drake with 1,058 and is just the fourth Bulldog ever to record both 1,000 kills and 1,000 digs.



Valparaiso welcomes back four starters from a Crusader squad that finished 15-19 as a member of the Horizon League a year ago. The Crusaders won at least 20 matches every season from 2002 through 2015 and is one of just nine programs nationwide to

accomplish that feat. Leading the way for the Crusaders in their first MVC season will be their two leading attackers from last season. Senior Taylor Graboski averaged 2.80 kills per set, while junior Katherine Carlson added 2.70 kills and 2.47 digs per set in 2016.



Bradley enters its second season under head coach Carol Price-Torok, welcoming back four starters, plus the libero, from the 2016 Braves group that finished 7-22 overall and 2-16 in MVC play. Junior Erica Haslag helped headline Bradley's attack in 2016 with her 320 kills, the most by a Brave since 2006, and became the fifth player in program history to reach 600 career kills before the start of their junior season. Haslag needs 385 kills as a junior to top 1,000 in her career.



Indiana State returns three starters and its libero from its 2016 team that finished 10-20 (4-14 MVC). First year head coach Lindsay Allman takes over the Sycamore volleyball program and will look to take ISU to the postseason for the first time since 2014. Indiana State returns one MVC postseason award winner in sophomore middle blocker Damadj Johnson. The St. Louis native was named to the MVC All-Freshman squad and led the Sycamores with 107 total blocks last season, finishing 11th all-time in single-season total blocks. Johnson also finished the season with the best hitting percentage on the squad (.309).



Evansville registered a record of 5-26 (1-17 MVC) in 2016. The Aces return all six starters and their libero from that team and will look to improve on last season's win total. Evansville's top returner is junior Mildrelis Rodriguez. In 2016, Rodriguez paced the Aces with 309 kills, an average of 2.73 per set, while also registering a team-best 325 digs.

The 2017 regular season campaign begins the weekend of August 25-26, with all 10 teams in non-conference tournament action. Illinois State will host the 2017 MVC Championship, Nov. 23-25, in Normal, Illinois, where the league's top-six teams will battle it out for the Valley's automatic bid to the 2017 NCAA Tournament.

OPENING WEEKEND SCHEDULE

	OPPONENT	SITE	TIME
Fri., Aug. 25	Southern Illinois vs. Western Kentucky	Oxford, Ohio	10:30 AM
	Missouri State @ Appalachian State	Boone, NC	11 AM
	Chicago State vs. Evansville	Macomb, Ill.	3 PM
	DePaul vs. Indiana State	Bloomington, Ind.	4 PM
	UC Santa Barbara vs. Illinois State	Waco, Texas	4 PM
	Northern Arizona vs. Southern Illinois	Oxford, Ohio	4 PM
	Memphis vs. Bradley	Charleston, Ill.	4 PM
	Valparaiso @ Notre Dame	South Bend, Ind.	6 PM
	Seattle vs. Loyola	Berkeley, Calif.	6:30 PM
	Bryant vs. Drake	Fullerton, Calif.	7 PM
Sat., Aug. 26	New Mexico State vs. Valparaiso	South Bend, Ind.	9 AM
	Ball State vs. Indiana State	Bloomington, Ind.	9 AM
	#8 Kansas vs. Missouri State	Raleigh, NC	9:30 AM
	#19 Missouri vs. UNI	Clarksville, Tenn.	10 AM
	Southern Illinois @ Miami (OH)	Oxford, Ohio	10:30 AM
	Green Bay vs. Bradley	Charleston, Ill.	10:30 AM
	Florida State vs. Illinois State	Waco, Texas	11 AM
	Manhattan vs. Evansville	Macomb, Ill.	11 AM
	Loyola @ California	Berkeley, Calif.	12 PM
	Missouri State @ NC State	Raleigh, NC	2:30 PM
	Rhode Island vs. Valparaiso	South Bend, Ind.	3:30 PM
	Fairleigh Dickinson vs. Drake	Fullerton, Calif.	4 PM
	Middle Tennessee vs. UNI	Clarksville, Tenn.	5:30 PM
	Indiana State @ Indiana	Bloomington, Ind.	6 PM
	Illinois State @ Baylor	Waco, Texas	6 PM
	Evansville @ Western Illinois	Macomb, Ill.	7 PM
	UC Irvine vs. Loyola	Berkeley, Calif.	7 PM
	Bradley @ Eastern Illinois	Charleston, Ill.	7 PM
	UC-Riverside vs. Drake	Fullerton, Calif.	9:30 PM
Sun., Aug. 27	UNI @ Austin Peay	Clarksville, Tenn.	12 PM