



ST. LOUIS -- The league coaches have tabbed Illinois State's men's program and Illinois State's women's program as the favorite in the 2018-19 Track and Field preseason poll.

Men's Track & Field Preseason Poll

Illinois State was selected to finish first in the preseason poll after finishing first at the 2018 Indoor Championship and second in the Outdoor Championship. The Redbirds received five first-place votes and 75 total points. Illinois State returns all three athletes (Ryan Ashenbrenner, Kellen Kravik, and Luke Nelson) who medaled in the Indoor Pole Vault. On the track, the Redbirds will look Jack Anstey and J.D. Lafayette to place again in the mile and 800m respectively. James Brandenburg and Jordan Wilkerson look to medal again in the heptathlon after finishing first and third respectively in 2017.

Indiana State was picked to finish second with 68 total points and one first-place vote. The Sycamores finished second with 112 points at the 2018 Indoor Championship. Akis Medrano, who placed second in the 5,000m run, and Dearn Herron, who finished third in the triple jump, look to medal again this season.

Northern Iowa came in a close third with 67 total points and three first-place votes. The Panthers return all four members of the 4x400m relay team (Sven Van Den Bergh, Jacob Smith, Jojo Forst, and Evan Long) that came in second place at the Indoor Championship. Evan Long also received all-MVC honors for finishing third in the 400m.

Securing fourth with 58 points is Southern Illinois. The Salukis are led by first year head coach Rosalind Joseph. Coach Joseph will look to five of her upperclassmen who received all-MVC honors during indoor last season. Among those returners are Ricky Hurley and Josh Maier. Hurley medaled in shot put and weight throw while Josh Maier excelled on the track by making the podium in the 5,000m and 3,000m runs.

Bradley holds onto the fifth spot with 40 points. The Braves welcome back four student-athletes who earned all-MVC honors for their indoor performance. Michael Ward brought home two first place finishes in the 5,000m and 3,000m runs. The victories were the first time a runner from Bradley had one either one of those races during the Indoor Championship. Alec Hartman, Nick Porter, and David Shadid were part of the distance medley relay team that came in first with a time of 10:01.72.

Drake came in a close sixth with 39 points. Drake's Cloud Masibhera earned Freshman of the Year after finishing first in the long jump with a leap of 7.52m. Masibhera is joined by Deonne Witherspoon (60m dash), Xavier Lechleithner (DMR), and Kevin Kelly

(DMR and mile run) who placed in the top three in their respective events.

Loyola received 31 points, placing seventh in the preseason poll. The Ramblers return five student-athletes who made it to the podium at the Indoor Championships. Eric Burns (long jump) along with all four members of the 4x400 relay team that finished third look to medal again.

Valparaiso was picked eighth with 18 points. Valpo returns six student-athletes who scored points at the indoor championship. Jeremy Seiler placed seventh in pole vault. Joey Black and Connor Hickey were part of the distance medley relay team. Hickey was joined by Malik Riley, Bryce Otterbach, and Ben Sekuloski to finish seventh in the 4x400 relay.

Evansville received 9 points in the preseason poll. Coach Walters will look to his returners to lead the growing program as the Aces enter their second indoor season.

2018 Men's Indoor T&F Preseason Poll

Rank	Team (1st-place votes)	Points
1	Illinois State (5)	75
2	Indiana State (1)	68
3	Northern Iowa (3)	67
4	Southern Illinois	58
5	Bradley	40
6	Drake	39
7	Loyola	31
8	Valparaiso	18
9	Evansville	9

Women's Track & Field Preseason Poll

Illinois State was picked to finish first in the preseason poll. The Redbirds received nine first-place votes and 99 total points. In the 2017-18 season, Illinois State finished first at both the Indoor and Outdoor Championships. The Redbirds return 12 student-athletes who received all-conference honors during indoor last year. Among those returners are seniors Tessa Holland, Amanda McClain, and Ashleigh Wilson, who medaled in multiple indoor events.

Indiana State received a single first-place vote while totaling 89 points to finish second in this year's pre-season poll. Mid-Distance runners Rebecca Odusola and Imani Davis are two of the 10 returning student-athletes who placed during the Indoor Championship. Odusola and Davis both medaled in two events.

Northern Iowa was picked to finish third in the poll after receiving 76 total points. The Panthers have five student-athletes on their roster who earned all-MVC honors for their performance at the 2018 MVC Indoor Championship.

Securing fourth with 74 points is Southern Illinois. Three Salukis who earned all-conference honors return for another season. In her freshman season, A'veun Moore-Jones placed third in the shot put. Ty'Juana Eason and Alicia Reed were part of the 4x400 relay team that finished in a time of 3:43.35 to finish first. The 4x400 relay victory was a first for the Salukis since 2005.

Missouri State notched the No. 5 spot, tallying 61 points. Jamilah James, who earned 2018 Indoor Freshman of the Year honors, looks to place in the triple jump again this season. Missouri State is led this season by Interim Head Coach, Jordan Fife. Fife has been serving as the assistant coach since 2014.

Loyola secured sixth place with 48 points. The Ramblers will look to redshirt senior Lindsey Brewis to help lead the team. Brewis took first in the 5,000m and second in the 3,000m during the 2017 indoor championship.

Drake came in seventh with 37 points. The Bulldogs will lean on their three seniors to lead their large freshman class.

Bradley took eighth in the poll with 36 points. The Braves return five upperclassmen who helped score points during the Indoor Championships. Niamh Markham, Kathryn Adelman, Savana Peterson, and Brooke Nusser earned a fourth-place finish in the distance medley relay. Natalie Burant also scored points for the Braves after finishing fourth in the 5,000m run.

Valparaiso was chosen ninth with 18 points. Valpo has an experienced group of juniors and seniors that will help lead their large group of underclassmen that includes eight true freshmen.

Evansville rounds out the women's poll with 12 total points. The Aces return several student-athletes who contributed on the track and in the field during their first year of competition in 2017-18.

2018 Women's Indoor T&F Preseason Poll

Rank	Team (1st-place votes)	Points
1	Illinois State (9)	99
2	Indiana State (1)	89
3	Northern Iowa	76
4	Southern Illinois	74
5	Missouri State	61
6	Loyola	48
7	Drake	37
8	Bradley	36
9	Valparaiso	18
10	Evansville	12