



DRAKE PICKED TO REPEAT IN VALLEY WOMEN'S HOOPS

ST. LOUIS – Drake University has been tabbed as the preseason favorite in the MVC women's basketball race in the annual survey of the league's coaches, sports information directors and media.

Drake, which has won three-straight Missouri Valley Conference regular season titles, will vie for a four-peat in 2019-20. A four-peat of the MVC regular season would be the first-ever in program history and only the second in MVC history. Missouri State won six-straight league titles from 1990-91 through 1995-96. Drake, which qualified for its 13th NCAA Tournament last season, is looking to make the NCAA Tournament for a fourth-consecutive season, which would be a program best. Drake received 31 of 40 first-place votes and 359 total points, out-distancing Missouri State (329, 81st place votes), UNI (297, 1st place vote) and Bradley (255).



Drake returns three starters and its top two scorers from 2018-19, including two-time MVC Jackie Stiles Player of the Year Becca Hittner and Sara Rhine.

Last season, the decorated duo became just the second set of teammates to lead the Valley in scoring with Hittner at a league-best 19.7 points per game and Rhine next at 18.3 points. Rhine with 1,654 career points and Hittner with 1,565 points will each strive for 2,000 career points, joining just four in program history and eight in MVC history to reach the impressive 2,000-point mark. Hittner, the back-to-back Jackie Stiles MVC Player of the Year, can become just the third MVC player to win the award three times.

Drake is the only team in the country to rank in the top three nationally of Assists Per Game

each of the last three seasons. Baylor, UConn, and Iowa have done it twice. Drake finished 10th in field goal percentage last year, 5th in 2017-18, and 2nd in 2016-17. UConn is the only other school to finish in the top 10 all three seasons.



Missouri State welcomes back four starters from last season's 25-10 (16-2 MVC) team that advanced to the NCAA Sweet 16 for the fourth

time in program history. MSU closed the season with 24 wins in its final 27 games, and brings back 79 percent of scoring, 84 percent of rebounds, 73 percent of assists, 78 percent of steals, 90 percent of blocked shots and 83 percent of minutes played. Amaka Agugua-Hamilton was named the eighth head coach in Lady Bears history in April. An 18-year veteran of Division I women's basketball, Coach Mox spent the six seasons prior to her arrival in Springfield as associate head coach at Michigan State. Missouri State enters the 2019 season with a streak of 10 consecutive true road wins and 11 straight away victories in MVC play. MSU's last loss in an opposing gym came on Dec. 9, 2018 at Indiana, and the last Valley road setback was Feb. 4, 2018 at Drake.



UNI enters the 2019-20 season after earning a fifth-straight postseason bid, going 20-13 overall and 12-6 in MVC action, earning a spot

in the WNIT. The Panthers return a pair of All-MVC honorees in Karli Rucker and Megan Maahs. Rucker was an all-conference honoree in 2018-19 after a breakout sophomore

2019-20 PRESEASON POLL

Rank	Team (1st-place votes)	Points
1.	Drake (31).....	359
2.	Missouri State (8).....	329
3.	UNI (1).....	297
4.	Bradley.....	255
5.	Southern Illinois.....	235
6.	Illinois State.....	212
7.	Loyola.....	188
8.	Valparaiso.....	126
9.	Indiana State.....	111
10.	Evansville.....	88

season, scoring 495 points. Maahs returns to the lineup after missing most of the season with an injury but will look to return to form of the 2017-18 season when she earned All-MVC and All-Defensive team honors. UNI has added three freshmen in Cailyn Morgan, Sara McCullough and Kaitlin Winston. The Panthers also added graduate transfer guard Kristina Cavey from Fresno State. She started the first 19 games of the 2018-19 season for the Bulldogs and is the second grad transfer ever for the UNI program.



Drake senior guard Becca Hittner earned a second-straight Jackie Stiles Player of the Year award last season. Hittner led The Valley in scoring (19.7). She can become the third MVC player to win the award three times, joining Jackie Stiles of Missouri State and Kristi Cirone of Illinois State.

2019-20 MVC PRESEASON ALL-CONFERENCE TEAM

PLAYER, TEAM	POS.	CL.	HT.	HOMETOWN (HIGH SCHOOL)
*Becca Hittner, Drake	G	Sr.	6-0	Urbandale, Iowa (Dowling Catholic)
Nicole Martin, Southern Illinois	F	Sr.	6-1	Jefferson City, Mo. (Jefferson City)
TeTe Maggett, Illinois State	G	Sr.	5-9	North Chicago, Ill. (Zion-Benton)
Sara Rhine, Drake	F	RSr.	6-1	Eldon, Mo. (Eldon)
Karli Rucker, UNI	G	Jr.	5-6	Eldridge, Iowa (North Scott)

*Preseason Player of the Year





Bradley returns four starters from last year's group (20-10, 10-8 MVC) and is picked to finish fourth in the poll, marking the highest preseason selection for the Braves since the 1991-92 season. Last year's 20-win season marked the fourth consecutive year Bradley finished with an improved record and was the first 20-win season for the program since 2008-09. Three Bradley players averaged at least 12.6 points per game last season, paced by junior guard Gabi Haack's 14.9 points per outing, while sophomore Lasha Petree (13.2 ppg) and senior Chelsea Brackmann (12.6 ppg) joined her in double figures. Bradley was the first MVC team to have three individuals average at least 12.6 points per contest since the 2015-16 Drake squad. The last time the Braves had three players score at least 12.0 points per game in a season was 1994-95.



Southern Illinois finished the season with a 15-15 overall record and an 8-10 mark in MVC action. SIU returns an experienced nucleus of 10 letter winners from a year ago, including all five starters. The returners are led by two-time All-MVC first team selection Nicole Martin and 2019 All-MVC honorable mention Makenzie Silvey. Martin ranked in the top-10 of the MVC in four statistical categories, including sixth in points per game and seventh in rebounds per game, while Silvey's 14.4 points per game average was the third-best in the MVC amongst sophomores. The Salukis will also add a talented quartet of newcomers to the mix in 2019-20.



Illinois State welcomes back two starters from the 2018-19 squad as the Redbirds posted a 19-12 overall mark (11-7 MVC). The 19 wins was the most in the last six seasons and the 11-7 mark in MVC action was the most since 2012-13. The Redbirds return 2019 MVC Newcomer of the Year and First Team All-MVC selection TeTe Maggett. The rising senior was tabbed MVC Newcomer of the Week four times during the 2018-19 season and swept the weekly honors the week of Jan. 2. Maggett scored in double figures in 25 contests, averaging 15.9 points per game which was second on the team and fourth in the Valley. She led the team in three-pointers and three-point field goal percentage, making 60-of-178 as a junior. A native of North Chicago, Illinois, Maggett also led the team in assists (2.4) and minutes (34.1) during her first season with the Redbirds.



Loyola returns all five starters from last season's team that finished the season 13-18 overall and 6-12 in MVC play. The Ramblers welcome back 11 letter winners from last season, a group that accounted for 96% of Loyola's total offense. Leading the returnees is the trio of junior Abby O'Connor and sophomores Allison Day and Janae Gonzales. O'Connor put together one of the top seasons for a Rambler in recent memory, averaging team-high marks in scoring (14.6 ppg), rebounds (7.6 rpg), and blocked shots (1.6 bpg) en route to being named a First Team All-MVC selection. The now sophomore pairing of Day and Gonzales both found their way onto The Valley's All-Freshman Team a season ago. Gonzales quickly established herself as one of the conference's top threats from distance, operating at a 36% clip (55-of-152) from beyond three-point arc as she averaged 11.4 points, while Day developed into a fixture in the starting five, averaging 6.7 points and 5.8 rebounds.



Valparaiso finished last season with an 8-24 overall record (3-15 MVC). Head Coach Mary Evans made her mark on the program's record books as she instilled her desired playing style from day one of her first season. Valpo shattered the previous program record for three-pointers made in a season, knocking down 276 triples - a mark which ranks seventh in a single season in MVC history. Among the returnees in 2019-20 are a pair of double-digit scorers from last year's squad. Redshirt junior Addison Stoller enjoyed a breakout campaign last year, averaging a team-best 12.8 points and 6.6 rebounds per game. Stoller became just the third Valpo player in the last decade to finish a season with at least 400 points and 200 rebounds. Meanwhile, on the defensive end, Stoller ranked third in the Valley in steals, and her total of 67 steals was the most by a Valpo player since 2012.



Indiana State will bring in a whole new roster from last season's team (11-19, 5-13 MVC). Head Coach Vicki Hall will welcome in a fresh start for Indiana State women's basketball, as all 14 athletes on the roster are newcomers to the program. The Sycamores' 14 roster additions are the most in Division I and includes six junior college transfers and eight freshmen. BlueStar Report listed Indiana State as having one of the best recruiting classes in the nation. The Sycamores were given an honorable mention ranking in the report and was the only Missouri Valley Conference school to appear on the list.



Evansville returns two starters from last season's squad (4-26, 2-16 MVC). The Aces must try and replace nearly 60% of its scoring from a year ago, including its top three scorers. The top returning scorer is sophomore Makayla Wallace who averaged 6.3 points per game last season. The Aces welcome in eight newcomers to the team in 2019-20. Three of the newcomers have familiarity with the program after spending parts of the 2018-19 season on the sidelines at UE. Transfers Jada Polan, Lola Bracy, and NaTaya Partee look to make an immediate impact on the Aces with collegiate experience.

Preseason voters have correctly selected the conference's regular-season champion 22 times in 36 seasons, but since the poll was expanded to include sports information directors and media in 1994-95, pollsters have accurately predicted 17 of the 25 champions. Preseason favorites have played in 28 post-seasons, including 20 NCAA Tournaments with one Sweet 16 and one Final Four appearance.

STARTERS RETURNING/LOST

Team	Returning	Lost
Bradley	4	1
Drake	3	2
Evansville	2	3
Illinois State	2	3
Indiana State	0	5
Loyola	5	0
Missouri State	4	1
UNI	2	3
Southern Illinois	5	0
Valparaiso	3	2
MVC TOTAL	30	20
MVC 2018-19	37	13
MVC 2017-18	31	19



Senior Alexa Willard, will lead the charge for the Lady Bears in 2019-20. Willard averaged 12.3 ppg and 2.5 rpg a year ago. Willard was named the MVC Tournament MVP after scoring 30 points in the title game vs. Drake. She averaged 18.5 points in NCAA Tourney wins over DePaul and Iowa State to send MSU to the Sweet Sixteen.

PREVIOUS MVC WOMEN'S BASKETBALL PRESEASON POLLS

1983-84 1. Southern Illinois (3) 2. Drake (4) 3. Illinois State (1) 4. Wichita State (1) 5. Eastern Illinois 6. Indiana State 7. Missouri State (1) 8. Northern Iowa 9. Western Illinois 10. Bradley	PTS. 20 22 31 44 48 63 70 82 83 87			
1984-85 1. Illinois State (9) 2. Drake 3. Southern Illinois 4. Wichita State 5. Eastern Illinois 6. Missouri State (1) 7. Indiana State 8. Bradley 9. Western Illinois 10. Northern Iowa	PTS. 99 77 73 67 63 59 38 36 25 12			
1985-86 1. Drake (7.5) 2. Southern Illinois (2.5) 3. Illinois State 4. Missouri State 5. Bradley 6. Eastern Illinois 7. Indiana State 8. Wichita State 9. Northern Iowa 10. Western Illinois	PTS.. 97.5 92.5 74 65 51 50 41 38 31 10			
1986-87 1. Southern Illinois (10) 2. Illinois State 3. Bradley 4. Drake 5. Eastern Illinois 6. Missouri State 7. Indiana State 8. Wichita State 9. Northern Iowa 10. Western Illinois	PTS. 100 89 75 64 53 49 37 35 34 14			
1987-88 1. Southern Illinois (10) 2. Eastern Illinois 3. Drake 4. Bradley 5. Illinois State 6. Missouri State 7. Wichita State 8. Western Illinois 9. Indiana State 10. Northern Iowa	PTS. 100 80 75 71 70 48 33 29 26 18			
1988-89 1. Eastern Illinois (5) 2. Illinois State (3) 3. Drake (2) 4. Southern Illinois 5. Indiana State 6. Missouri State 7. Bradley 8. Western Illinois 9. Wichita State 10. Northern Iowa	PTS. 74 73 69 59 49 36 34 24 18 14			
1989-90 1. Southern Illinois (5) 2. Illinois State (4) 3. Eastern Illinois 4. Drake 5. Missouri State (1) 6. Western Illinois 7. Indiana State 8. Bradley 9. Wichita State 10. Northern Iowa	PTS. 77 74 58 55 49 45 33 32 16 11			
1990-91 1. Southern Illinois (4) 2. Missouri State (3) 3. Illinois State (2) 4. Bradley (1) 5. Eastern Illinois 6. Western Illinois 7. Wichita State 8. Drake 9. Indiana State 10. Northern Iowa	PTS. 94 87 83 72 53 45 38 33 27 18			
1991-92 1. Missouri State (8) 2. Southern Illinois (2) 3. Illinois State 4. Bradley 5. Wichita State 6. Indiana State 7. Eastern Illinois 8. Western Illinois 9. Drake 10. Northern Iowa	PTS. 98 91 74 58 55 53 48 29 28 16			
1992-93 1. Southern Illinois (6) 2. Missouri State (3) 3. Illinois State (1) 4. Creighton 5. Drake 6. Wichita State 7. Indiana State 8. Bradley 9. Northern Iowa	PTS. 77 72 63 57 38 38 30 17 17			
1993-94 1. Missouri State (6) 2. Creighton (3) 3. Drake 4. Southern Illinois 5. Wichita State 6. Bradley 7. Illinois State 8. Indiana State 9. Northern Iowa	PTS. 78 75 58 44 42 39 35 18 16			
1994-95 1. Creighton (26) 2. Missouri State (3) 3. Drake (5) 4. Southern Illinois (3) 5. Wichita State 6. Bradley 7. Illinois State 8. Indiana State 9. Northern Iowa 10. Evansville	PTS. 355 291 288 285 234 172 149 137 64 60			
1995-96 1. Missouri State (20) 2. Drake (13) 3. Southern Illinois (4) 4. Creighton 5. Indiana State 6. Wichita State 7. Illinois State 8. Bradley 9. Northern Iowa 10. Evansville	PTS. 344 337 286 265 199 195 167 118 67 57			
1996-97 1. Missouri State (33) 2. Drake (6) 3. Southern Illinois 4. Illinois State (1) 5. Creighton 6. Bradley 7. Northern Iowa 8. Wichita State 9. Indiana State 10. Evansville	PTS. 391 311 301 288 278 183 150 134 111 53			
1997-98 1. Drake (29) 2. Missouri State (11) 3. Illinois State 4. Southern Illinois 5. Wichita State 6. Indiana State 7. Bradley 8. Creighton 9. Northern Iowa 10. Evansville	PTS. 385 363 316 236 226 215 182 123 101 53			
1998-99 1. Missouri State (26) 2. Drake (12) 3. Indiana State 4. Creighton 5. Northern Iowa 6. Illinois State 7. Wichita State 8. Southern Illinois 9. Evansville 10. Bradley	PTS. 368 350 284 245 199 198 159 143 79 65			
1999-00 1. Drake (14) 2. Missouri State (14) 3. Evansville (2) 4. Northern Iowa 5. Creighton 6. Wichita State 7. Indiana State 8. Southern Illinois 9. Illinois State 10. Bradley	PTS. 276 269 243 226 161 146 131 87 77 34			
2000-01 1. Missouri State (31) 2. Drake (1) 3. Evansville (7) 4. Northern Iowa 5. Wichita State 6. Creighton 7. Indiana State 8. Southern Illinois 9. Illinois State 10. Southern Illinois	PTS. 378 330 329 243 224 206 177 102 101 55			
2001-02 1. Drake (37) 2. Missouri State 3. Northern Iowa 4. Evansville 5. Wichita State 6. Creighton 7. Indiana State 8. Bradley 9. Illinois State 10. Southern Illinois	PTS. 370 306 283 259 233 195 125 123 88 53			
2002-03 1. Creighton (31) 2. Drake (9) 3. Missouri State 4. Wichita State 5. UNI 6. Bradley 7. Indiana State 8. Evansville 9. Illinois State 10. Southern Illinois	PTS. 390 361 271 256 244 216 170 135 98 59			
2003-04 1. Missouri State (27) 2. Creighton (12) 3. Indiana State (1) 4. UNI 5. Wichita State 6. Drake 7. Bradley 8. Evansville 9. Illinois State 10. Southern Illinois	PTS. 379 365 301 277 230 212 147 129 105 52			
2004-05 1. Missouri State (34) 2. Creighton (3) 3. Illinois State 4. Drake (2) 5. Indiana State 6. UNI 7. Bradley 8. Wichita State 9. Evansville 10. Southern Illinois	PTS. 379 324 283 275 272 182 158 117 106 40			
2005-06 1. Indiana State (34) 2. Missouri State (3) 3. Creighton (3) 4. Drake 5. UNI 6. Evansville 7. Illinois State 8. Bradley 9. Wichita State 10. Southern Illinois	PTS. 393 349 302 271 219 207 190 99 92 78			
2006-07 1. Drake (28) 2. Wichita State (10) 3. UNI 4. Evansville 5. Illinois State 6. Indiana State (2) 7. Missouri State 8. Southern Illinois 9. Creighton 10. Bradley	PTS. 373 345 274 242 237 227 176 176 84 66			
2007-08 1. Drake (24) 2. Illinois State (12) 3. Indiana State 4. Evansville (1) 5. Southern Illinois (1) 6. Creighton (1) 7. Missouri State 8. UNI 9. Wichita State 10. Bradley	PTS. 348 342 289 288 233 223 136 113 95 78			
2008-09 1. Illinois State (40) 2. Creighton 3. Drake 4. Evansville 5. UNI 6. Missouri State 7. Indiana State 8. Bradley 9. Southern Illinois 10. Wichita State	PTS. 400 310 297 251 245 215 166 161 108 47			
2009-10 1. Creighton (34) 2. Illinois State (6) 3. Drake 4. UNI 5. Indiana State 6. Bradley 7. Missouri State 8. Evansville 9. Wichita State 10. Southern Illinois	PTS. 393 340 296 253 250 214 188 108 97 61			
2010-11 1. Missouri State (27) 2. UNI (3) 3. Creighton (7) 4. Illinois State (2) 5. Wichita State 6. Bradley (1) 7. Drake 8. Indiana State 9. Southern Illinois 10. Evansville	PTS. 385 329 328 258 226 204 180 150 83 57			
2011-12 1. Missouri State (36) 2. UNI (4) 3. Wichita State 4. Creighton 5. Indiana State 6. Illinois State 7. Drake 8. Bradley 9. Evansville 10. Southern Illinois	PTS. 396 322 315 246 234 224 168 162 68 65			
2012-13 1. Creighton (26) 2. Wichita State (12) 3. Illinois State (2) 4. UNI 5. Missouri State 6. Bradley 7. Indiana State 8. Southern Illinois 9. Drake 10. Evansville	PTS. 382 347 323 272 265 144 135 123 121 119			
2013-14 1. Indiana State (26) 2. Wichita State (13) 3. UNI 4. Drake 5. Missouri State 6. Loyola (1) 7. Bradley 8. Illinois State 9. Evansville 10. Southern Illinois	PTS. 378 360 259 221 216 211 194 166 104 91			
2014-15 1. Wichita State (36) 2. UNI (2) 3. Drake (2) 4. Evansville 5. Indiana State 6. Missouri State 7. Loyola 8. Illinois State 9. Southern Illinois 10. Bradley	PTS. 395 348 315 252 234 190 166 125 116 60			
2015-16 1. Missouri State (22) 2. Drake (15) 3. UNI (1) 4. Southern Illinois (1) 5. Wichita State (1) 6. Evansville 7. Indiana State 8. Loyola 9. Bradley 10. Illinois State	PTS. 373 347 320 297 214 182 151 142 126 48			
2016-17 1. Drake (34) 2. UNI (4) 3. Missouri State (2) 4. Southern Illinois 5. Wichita State 6. Indiana State 7. Bradley 8. Illinois State 9. Evansville 10. Loyola	PTS. 392 317 313 306 248 199 141 123 109 52			
2017-18 1. Drake (31) 2. Missouri State (7) 3. UNI (2) 4. Southern Illinois 5. Indiana State 6. Bradley 7. Illinois State 8. Evansville 9. Valparaiso 10. Loyola	PTS. 356 323 311 256 231 216 139 132 131 105			
2018-19 1. Drake (35) 2. UNI (4) 3. Missouri State (1) 4. Southern Illinois 5. Illinois State 6. Bradley 7. Indiana State 8. Valparaiso 9. Loyola 10. Evansville	PTS. 363 325 287 279 223 193 192 135 127 76			
Gateway Conference poll until 1991-92 & MVC poll from 1992-93 until present. Number in parentheses is first-place votes. Polls were coaches-only prior to 1994-95. Media panel and sport information directors were added as voters for the 1994-95 poll.				
PREVIOUS FAVORITES AND CHAMPIONS				
1983-84	Preseason Favorite	Champion		
	Southern Illinois	Drake		
1984-85	Illinois State	Illinois State		
1985-86	Drake	Southern Illinois		
1986-87	Southern Illinois	Southern Illinois		
1987-88	Southern Illinois	Eastern Ill./Drake		
1988-89	Eastern Illinois	Illinois State		
1989-90	Southern Illinois	Southern Illinois/Illinois State		
1990-91	Southern Illinois	Missouri State		
1991-92	Missouri State	Missouri State		
1992-93	Southern Illinois	Missouri State		
1993-94	Missouri State	Missouri State		
1994-95	Creighton	Missouri State		
1995-96	Missouri State	Missouri State		
1996-97	Missouri State	Drake		
1997-98	Drake	Drake		
1998-99	Missouri State	Missouri State		
1999-00	Drake	Drake		
2000-01	Missouri State	Missouri State/Drake		
2001-02	Drake	Creighton		
2002-03	Creighton	Creighton/Indiana State		
2003-04	Missouri State	Missouri State		
2004-05	Missouri State	Missouri State		
2005-06	Indiana State	Indiana State		
2006-07	Drake	Southern Illinois		
2007-08	Drake	Drake/Evansville/Illinois State		
2008-09	Illinois State	Illinois State		
2009-10	Creighton	Illinois State		
2010-11	Missouri State	UNI		
2011-12	Missouri State	Missouri State		
2012-13	Creighton	Wichita State		
2013-14	Indiana State	Indiana State/Wichita State		
2014-15	Wichita State	Wichita State		
2015-16	Missouri State	UNI		
2016-17	Drake	Drake		
2017-18	Drake	Drake		
2018-19	Drake	Drake		