



Men's Basketball

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Drake's Tucker DeVries is the 2023 Larry Bird MVC Player of the Year

ST. LOUIS -- For just the fourth time in Missouri Valley Conference history, a sophomore student-athlete has earned the Larry Bird Trophy, presented by Great Southern Bank, given to the MVC men's basketball Player of the Year. Sophomore Tucker DeVries of Drake joins Doug McDermott of Creighton (2012), Fred VanVleet of Wichita State (2014), and AJ Green of UNI (2020) on that illustrious list, as announced by the league office tonight.

Additionally, DeVries joins a group of just five others to win both the league's Freshman of the Year honor and later earn the MVC's Larry Bird Trophy. Others who have previously accomplished the feat include Ashraf Amaya of Southern Illinois; Doug McDermott; Seth Tuttle of UNI; Cameron Krutwig of Loyola; and AJ Green.

DeVries is the first Drake Bulldog to win the league's top honor since Adam Emmenecker in 2008. In addition to DeVries, other Bulldogs to earn the league's Larry Bird trophy include Jeff Halliburton (1971), Lewis Lloyd (1980 and 1981), Curt Smith (1993) and Emmenecker. The league began honoring a Player of the Year for the first time in 1969.

The sophomore from Waukegan, Iowa, and son of Drake head coach Darian DeVries, helped Drake to its fifth-straight 20-win season for the first time in program history. The Bulldogs enter the State Farm MVC Tournament as the No. 2 seed with a 24-7 overall record and 15-5 league mark. Drake saw its 10-game win streak snapped in the regular-season "winner-take-all" finale in Peoria against league champ Bradley. DeVries has already reached the 1,000-point plateau for his career (1,069), and he ranked second in the MVC in scoring (18.9 ppg). His 79 three-pointers are third-best in the MVC.

Voting was conducted by coaches, sports information directors and a media panel (voters could not vote for their own student-athlete.) Including this year, 0 freshmen, 4 sophomores, 18 juniors (seven of whom repeated) and 33 seniors have won the award (spanning 1969-2022).

The league's top newcomer is Courvoisier McCauley of Indiana State. McCauley led the Sycamores in scoring this year, as he enters the State Farm MVC Championship with a 16.43 scoring average. He's one of the league's top marksmen, as he has made 95 three-pointers this season, just one behind league leader Drew Friberg of Belmont. Only six players in league history have reached 100 treys for a single season. McCauley is a transfer from DePaul, and he previously played for Indiana State coach Josh Schertz at Division II Lincoln Memorial. He is the third Indiana State player to earn the league's Newcomer of the Year honor, joining John S. Williams (1983) and Eddie Bird (1988).

Bradley's Malevy Leons is the league's Defensive Player of the Year. Leons joins just three MVC players in the past 32 years (since the 1991-92 season) to record 40+ blocks and 40+ steals in the same season. He enters the tournament with 50 steals and 49 blocks. No MVC player on record (since the MVC began keeping steals and blocks as a stat in 1980-81) has record a 50-50 season. He's the fifth player in school history to win the award, following Adebayo Akinkunle (1998), Jerome Robinson (2001), Patrick O'Bryant (2006) and Dyracus Simms-Edwards (2013). The league began selecting a Defensive Player of the Year in 1989.

The league's Freshman of the Year is Cade Tyson of Belmont. A handful of first-year MVC players have surpassed 200 total points as freshmen, and Tyson leads the way with 385 points so far. Only 24 freshmen in MVC history have reached 400 total points. Tucker DeVries was the last to accomplish the feat, hitting 502 last year. He enters this week as one of just eight freshmen nationally with 385 or more points (385), 125 or more total rebounds (131), and 25 or more steals (29).

The MVC also selects a "Sixth Man Award" recipient, and for the second time it goes to a Bradley student-athlete (Nate Kennell in 2019). The honor is presented to the league's top reserve player (one who has started fewer than 25 percent of his team's games - in all games or in conference-only play). The sixth-year senior has collected double digit scoring in 14 of his 25 games played this season. He started just two games yet averaged nearly 20 minutes per game. He averages 9.4 points and 4.2 rebounds per game, which are fourth and third-best, respectively, for the league champion.

In addition to the specialty awards, the Conference has announced its all-conference units (first-team, second-team, and third-team), all-newcomer team, all-freshman team, and all-defense team at the MVC Awards Banquet. The all-bench and most-improved units have been selected by the league's beat writers were announced Tuesday (Feb. 28), and the league's Scholar-Athlete Team was announced Monday. A complete listing of all-conference honorees and previous season specialty award winners is attached.

2023 Voting for MVC Larry Bird Trophy Presented by Great Southern Bank



Student-Athlete, School	1st	2nd	3rd	Pts.
Tucker DeVries, Drake	18	20	7	148
Ben Sheppard, Belmont	9	14	16	107
Rienk Mast, Bradley	15	5	11	98
Roman Penn, Drake	10	6	3	69

Student-athletes received three points for a first-place vote, two points for a second-place vote and one point for a third-place vote. Notably, coaches votes are weighted 3x. Additionally, panelists could not vote for the student-athletes on their team (or for media, the team they cover).

A total of 56 voters served on the 2023 panel, including four voters from each school and an MVC network panel, consisting of eight additional voters. Only the top-four vote getters are listed, so totals do not add up to 56. The maximum number of total votes received is 52 (as the four-person school panel can't vote for their own student-athlete).

MISSOURI VALLEY CONFERENCE 2022-23 Men's Basketball

2023 All-Missouri Valley Conference Men's Basketball Team

First Team	Yr.	Pos.	Ht.	Hometown
Tucker DeVries, Drake	So.	G/F	6-7	Waukee, Iowa (Waukee High)
Marcus Domask, S. Illinois	Sr.	F	6-6	Waupun, Wis. (Waupun High)
Ben Krikke, Valparaiso	Sr.	F	6-9	Edmonton, Alberta, Canada (Jasper Place)
Rienk Mast, Bradley	Jr.	F	6-9	Groningen, Netherlands (Donar Groningen)
Roman Penn, Drake	Gr.	G	6-0	Calumet City, Ill. (Bishop Noll)/Siena
Ben Sheppard, Belmont	Sr.	G	6-6	Atlanta, Ga. (Greater Atlanta Christian)

Second Team

Bowen Born, UNI	So.	G	5-11	Norwalk, Iowa (Norwalk High)
Jace Carter, UIC	So.	G	6-5	Titusville, Fla. (Astronaut High)
Donovan Clay, Missouri St.	Sr.	G/F	6-8	Alton, Ill. (Alton High)/Valparaiso
Malevy Leons, Bradley	Sr.	F	6-9	IJmuiden, Netherlands (Mineral Area College)
Courvoisier McCauley, IndSt.	Gr.	G	6-5	Indianapolis, Ind. (Manual High)/DePaul

Third Team

Cameron Henry, IndSt.	Sr.	G	6-6	Chesterfield, Va. (Lloyd C. Bird)/Lincoln Memorial
Lance Jones, S. Illinois	Sr.	G	6-1	Evanston, Ill. (Evanston Township)
Rob Perry, Murray State	Jr.	G	6-4	Orlando, Fla. (Oak Ridge High)/Stetson
Kenny Strawbridge, UE	Sr.	G	6-6	Rockford, Ill. (Rockford Lutheran)/Alabama St.
Garrett Sturtz, Drake	Gr.	G	6-3	Newton, Iowa (Newton)

All-Newcomer Team

Duke Deen, Bradley	Jr.	G	5-8	Shreveport, La. (Troy)
Drew Friberg, Belmont	Gr.	F	6-7	State College, Pa. (State College)/Princeton
Courvoisier McCauley, IndSt.	Gr.	G	6-5	Indianapolis, Ind. (Manual High)/DePaul
Rob Perry, Murray State	Jr.	G	6-4	Orlando, Fla. (Oak Ridge High)/Stetson
Cade Tyson, Belmont	Fr.	F	6-7	Monroe, N.C. (Carmel Christian High)

All-Freshman Team

Robbie Avila, Indiana St.	C	6-10	Oak Forest, Ill. (Oak Forest High)
Michael Duax, UNI	G/F	6-6	Dubuque, Iowa (Dubuque Hempstead)
Conor Enright, Drake	G	6-0	Mundelein, Ill. (Mundelein High)
Ja'Kobi Gillespie, Belmont	G	6-0	Greeneville, Tenn. (Greeneville High)
Cade Tyson, Belmont	F	6-7	Monroe, N.C. (Carmel Christian High)

All-Defensive Team

Donovan Clay, Missouri St.	Sr.	G/F	6-8	Alton, Ill. (Alton High)/Valparaiso
Xavier Johnson, S. Illinois	Sr.	G	6-1	Germantown, Md. (Episcopal)/George Mason
Lance Jones, S. Illinois	Sr.	G	6-1	Evanston, Ill. (Evanston Township)
Julian Larry, Indiana State	So.	G	6-3	Frisco, Texas (iSchool Entrepreneurial Academy)
Malevy Leons, Bradley	Sr.	F	6-9	IJmuiden, Netherlands (Mineral Area College)
Ben Sheppard, Belmont	Sr.	G	6-6	Atlanta, Ga. (Greater Atlanta Christian)

All-Bench Team (selected by beat writers & panel)

*Ja'Shon Henry, Bradley	Gr.	F	6-6	Saskatoon (Athol Murray College of Notre Dame)
Sardar Calhoun, Drake	Sr.	G/F	6-6	Tappahannock, Va. (Blue Ridge)/Texas Tech/ Florida State/Missouri-West Plains
Ja'Kobi Gillespie, Belmont	Fr.	G	6-0	Greeneville, Tenn. (Greeneville High)
Chance Moore, Missouri St.	So.	G	6-6	Brookhaven, Ga. (McEachern High)/Arkansas
Landon Wolf, UNI	Fr.	G	6-5	Cedar Falls, Iowa (Cedar Falls High)

Most-Improved Team (selected by beat writers & panel)

*Tytan Anderson, UNI	So.	G/F	6-6	Eldridge, Iowa (North Scott High)
Darnell Brodie, Drake	Sr.	F	6-10	Newark, N.J. (Newark East Side)/Seton Hall
Ben Krikke, Valparaiso	Sr.	F	6-9	Edmonton, Alberta, Canada (Jasper Place)
Malevy Leons, Bradley	Sr.	F	6-9	IJmuiden, Netherlands (Mineral Area College)
Zek Montgomery, Bradley	So.	G	6-6	Louisville, Ky. (St. Louis Christian Academy)

*denotes team "captain" as designated by the league's beat writers and media panel

LARRY BIRD TROPHY

Presented by



Tucker DeVries, Drake

NEWCOMER OF THE YEAR

Courvoisier McCauley, IndSt.

FRESHMAN OF THE YEAR

Cade Tyson, Belmont

DEFENSIVE MVP

Malevy Leons, Bradley

SIXTH-MAN OF THE YEAR

Ja'Shon Henry, Bradley



MVC SCHOLAR-ATHLETE OF THE YEAR

Marcus Domask, SIU

MOST IMPROVED TEAM CAPTAIN

Tytan Anderson, UNI

MVC COACH OF THE YEAR

Brian Wardle, Bradley

ELITE 17 AWARD

TBD

Scholar-Athlete (1st Tm.)

Marcus Domask, S. Illinois
Michael Duax, UNI
Ben Krikke, Valparaiso
Rienk Mast, Bradley
Filip Skobalj, UIC

Scholar-Athlete (2nd Tm.)

Trent Brown, Southern Illinois
Trenton Gibson, Indiana State
Connor Hickman, Bradley
Cade McKnight, Indiana State
Derek Sabin, Belmont

Scholar-Athlete (HM)

Quincy Anderson, Murray St.
James Betz, UNI
Conor Enright, Drake
Antoine Smith Jr., Evansville
Isaiah Walker, Belmont
Landon Wolf, UNI

All-Tournament

TBD