



Men's Basketball

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Drake's DeVries Repeats as Larry Bird MVC Player of the Year

ST. LOUIS -- Drake's Tucker DeVries has been named the MVC's Larry Bird Trophy Winner for the second-straight season. The Larry Bird Trophy, given to the MVC men's basketball Player of the Year, is presented by Great Southern Bank. DeVries joins 11 others to earn the award twice (and the ninth to do it back-to-back seasons). Doug McDermott of Creighton was the last MVC player to earn the honor in successive seasons (2012, 2013). No MVC player has won the award three times.

Last year, DeVries joined 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 of UNI. Also in 2023, DeVries became just the fourth sophomore to earn the league's top player honor (McDermott, Fred VanVleet of Wichita State and Green were the others.)

Other Drake Bulldogs to win the league's Larry Bird trophy include Jeff Halliburton (1971), Lewis Lloyd (1980 and 1981), Curt Smith (1993) and Adam Emmenecker (2008). The league began honoring a Player of the Year for the first time in 1969.

The junior from Waukee, Iowa, and son of Drake head coach Darian DeVries, helped Drake to its sixth-straight 20-win season for the first time in program history. DeVries has scored over 30 points four times this season and moved into No. 2 on the Drake career scoring list with 1,790 points, passing Josh Young. He's the only player in NCAA Division I to average 20.0 points and 6.5 rebounds with 100 assists, 50 steals and 50 or more three-point makes.

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, 19 juniors (eight of whom repeated) and 33 seniors have won the award (spanning 1969-2024).

The league's top newcomer is Ryan Conwell of Indiana State.

The South Florida transfer helped Indiana State to its first regular-season title since the 2000 season by averaging 16.0 points and 5.4 rebounds for the Sycamores. He's one of the league's top marksmen, as he has made 85 three-pointers this season, second only to teammate Isaiah Swope's 96 makes. Conwell is second in the MVC in three-point percentage (41.3) and ranked third in the league in free throw percentage 87.3 -- both tops for ISU. He is the fourth Indiana State player to earn the league's Newcomer of the Year honor, joining John S. Williams (1983), Eddie Bird (1988), and Courvoisier McCauley (2023). It marks the first time in seven years that the same school had back-to-back award winners (Missouri State: Dequon Miller, 2016; Alize Johnson, 2017).

For the second-straight year, Bradley's Malevy Leons is the league's Defensive Player of the Year. Leons is the first MVC player in the past 33 years (since the 1991-92 season) to record 40+ blocks and 40+ steals in back-to-back seasons -- he has 50 steals and 45 blocks this year after going 52-52 last 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). He's the first Bradley player to repeat as Defensive Player of the Year and seventh in league history to earn the award twice. The league began selecting a Defensive Player of the Year in 1989.

The league's Freshman of the Year is Cooper Schwieger of Valparaiso. Schwieger leads all MVC freshmen in both scoring average and rebounding average, both overall and in league play. He is averaging 13.2 points per game and 5.3 rebounds per game overall, while averaging 14.6 ppg and 5.7 rpg in conference play. Since 1992-93 only three MVC freshmen have averaged 12.0 points per game and 5.0 rebounds per game - and he's poised to join that group. Notably, a total of 25 freshmen in MVC history have reached 400 points in their first seasons. Schwieger has 397 entering this week. He's the first Valpo player to earn the league's top freshman honor.

The MVC also selects a "Sixth Man Award" recipient, and this year's winner is Xavier Bledson of Indiana State. 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). Bledson started just four of Indiana State's 20 league games and was one of only two Sycamores to play in all 31 games for the league regular-season champion. He averaged 18.5 minutes over the course of the season with averages of 6.9 points and 3.0 rebounds for ISU. Bledson was fourth on the team in three-pointers made this year with 35 as ISU established a school record for made three-pointers in 2024. Only one previous Sycamore player has been honored as MVC's "Sixth Man" (Khristian Smith in 2014).

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 (March 5), 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.

2024 Voting for MVC Larry Bird Trophy Presented by Great Southern Bank



Student-Athlete, School	1st	TOTAL
Tucker DeVries, Drake	32	160
Robbie Avila, Indiana State	16	131
Xavier Johnson, Southern Illinois	7	90

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. Additionally, panelists could not vote for the student-athletes on their team (or for media, the team they cover).

A total of 55 voters served on the 2024 panel, including four voters from each school and an MVC network panel, consisting of eight additional voters. Only the top-three vote getters are listed, so totals do not add up to 55. The maximum number of total votes received is 51 (as the four-person school panel can't vote for their own student-athlete).

MISSOURI VALLEY CONFERENCE 2023-24 Men's Basketball

2024 All-Missouri Valley Conference Men's Basketball Team

First Team	Yr.	Pos.	Ht.	Hometown
Robbie Avila, Indiana State	So.	C	6-10	Oak Forest (Ill.) Oak Forest High
Darnell Brodie, Drake	Gr.	F	6-10	Newark (N.J.) Newark East Side/Seton Hall
Duke Deen, Bradley	Sr.	G	170	Shreveport (La.) Bossier High/Troy
Tucker DeVries, Drake	Jr.	G/F	6-7	Waukee (Iowa) Waukee High
Xavier Johnson, S. Illinois	Gr.	G	6-1	Germantown (Md.) Episcopal/George Mason
Malevy Leons, Bradley	Gr.	F	6-9	IJmuiden (Netherlands) Apollo Amsterdam

Second Team

Ryan Conwell, Indiana St.	So.	G	6-4	Indianapolis (Ind.) Pike HS/South Florida
Ja'Kobi Gillespie, Belmont	So.	G	6-1	Greeneville (Tenn.) Greeneville High
Jayson Kent, Indiana State	Jr.	G/F	6-8	Oak Forest (Ill.) Oak Forest HS/Bradley
Isaiah Swope, Indiana St.	Jr.	G	5-10	Newburgh (Ind.) Castle HS/Southern Indiana
Cade Tyson, Belmont	So.	G/F	6-7	Monroe (N.C.) Carmel Christian High

Third Team

Malik Dia, Belmont	So.	F	6-9	Murfreesboro (Tenn.) Ensworth HS/Vanderbilt
Connor Hickman, Bradley	Jr.	G	6-3	Bloomington (Ind.) Bloomington South High
Nate Heise, UNI	Jr.	G	6-5	Lake City (Minn.) Lincoln High
Julian Larry, Indiana St.	Jr.	G	6-3	Frisco (Texas) iSchool Entrepreneurial Acad.
Alston Mason, Missouri St.	Jr.	G	6-2	Phoenix (Ariz.) Blue Valley NW High/Oklahoma

All-Newcomer Team

Ryan Conwell, Indiana St.	So.	G	6-4	Indianapolis (Ind.) Pike HS/South Florida
Malik Dia, Belmont	So.	F	6-9	Murfreesboro (Tenn.) Ensworth HS/Vanderbilt
Myles Foster, Illinois State	Sr.	F	6-7	Brooklyn (N.Y.) Brooks School/Monmouth
Ben Humrichous, Evansville	Sr.	G/F	6-9	Tipton (Ind.) Tipton HS/Huntington Univ.
Isaiah Swope, Indiana St.	Jr.	G	5-10	Newburgh (Ind.) Castle HS/Southern Indiana

All-Freshman Team

Almar Atlason, Bradley	F	6-8	Reykjabin (Iceland) Sunrise Christian Acad.
Chuck Bailey III, Evansville	G	6-5	Detroit (Mich.) Hamtramck High
Cooper Schwieger, Valpo	F	6-9	Overland Park (Kan.) Blue Valley Southwest
Johnny Kinziger, Illinois St.	G	5-11	De Pere (Wis.) De Pere High
Kevin Overton, Drake	G	6-5	Oklahoma City (Okla.) Midwest City

All-Defensive Team

Ja'Kobi Gillespie, Belmont	So.	G	6-1	Greeneville (Tenn.) Greeneville High
Jayson Kent, Indiana State	Jr.	G/F	6-8	Oak Forest (Ill.) Oak Forest HS/Bradley
Julian Larry, Indiana St.	Jr.	G	6-3	Frisco (Texas) iSchool Entrepreneurial Acad.
Malevy Leons, Bradley	Gr.	F	6-9	IJmuiden (Netherlands) Apollo Amsterdam
Toby Okani, UIC	Sr.	G	6-8	Orange (N.J.) Cushing Academy/Duquesne

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

*Xavier Bledson, IndSt.	R-Sr.	G	6-6	Gainesville (Ga.) Gainesville High
Chuck Bailey III, Evansville	Fr.	G	6-5	Detroit (Mich.) Hamtramck High
Tanner Cuff, Evansville	Jr.	F	6-7	American Fork (Utah) Salt Lake City CC
Cesare Edwards, MoState	Jr.	F	6-9	Hartsville (S.C.) Hartsville High
Colby Garland, Drake	Fr.	G	6-1	Magnolia (Ark.) Maumelle High
Johnny Kinziger, Illinois St.	Fr.	G	5-11	De Pere (Wis.) De Pere High
Brian Moore Jr., Murray St.	Jr.	G	6-1	Harlem (N.Y.) Kingston High

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

*Xavier Johnson, S. Illinois	Gr.	G	6-1	Germantown (Md.) Episcopal High
Ja'Kobi Gillespie, Belmont	So.	G	6-1	Greenville (Tenn.) Greenville High
Darius Hannah, Bradley	Sr.	F	6-9	Milwaukee (Wis.) Milwaukee Academy of Science
Connor Hickman, Bradley	Jr.	G	6-3	Bloomington (Ind.) Bloomington South High
Jayson Kent, Indiana State	Jr.	G/F	6-8	Oak Forest (Ill.) Oak Forest High

*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

Ryan Conwell, Indiana State

FRESHMAN OF THE YEAR

Cooper Schwieger, Valparaiso

DEFENSIVE MVP

Malevy Leons, Bradley

SIXTH-MAN OF THE YEAR

Xavier Bledson, Indiana State



MVC SCHOLAR-ATHLETE OF THE YEAR

Ben Humrichous, Evansville

MOST IMPROVED TEAM CAPTAIN

Xavier Johnson, S. Illinois

MVC COACH OF THE YEAR

Josh Schertz, Indiana State

ELITE 17 AWARD

TBD

Scholar-Athlete (1st Tm.)

Quincy Anderson, Murray St.
Trent Brown, Southern Illinois
Connor Hickman, Bradley
Ben Humrichous, Evansville
Filip Skobalj, UIC
Cade Tyson, Belmont

Scholar-Athlete (2nd Tm.)

Xavier Bledson, Indiana State
Michael Duax, UNI
Conor Enright, Drake
Nate Heise, UNI
Jayson Kent, Indiana State

Scholar-Athlete (HM)

Damien Mayo Jr., MoState
Isaiah Walker, Belmont
Landon Wolf, UNI

All-Tournament

*TBD

*Doug Elgin Award

Most Outstanding Player