



For Immediate Release
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Illinois State • Indiana State • Missouri State • North Dakota • North Dakota State • Northern Iowa
South Dakota • South Dakota State • Southern Illinois • Western Illinois • Youngstown State

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2020-21 Valley Football Standings (through Saturday, March 13)

Team	MVFC		Points		Overall		Points		H	A	Stk.
	W-L	Pct.	For	Opp	W-L	Pct.	For	Opp			
North Dakota	4-0	1.000	131	69	4-0	1.000	131	69	3-0	1-0	W4
North Dakota State	3-1	.750	85	58	4-1	.800	124	86	3-0	1-1	W2
Southern Illinois	3-1	.750	106	96	4-1	.800	126	113	3-0	1-1	W3
South Dakota State	3-1	.750	105	75	3-1	.750	105	75	2-0	1-1	W2
Missouri State	2-1	.667	57	73	2-4	.333	101	181	0-2	2-2	W1
UNI	2-2	.500	77	51	2-2	.500	77	51	1-1	1-1	L1
South Dakota	1-2	.333	61	68	1-2	.333	61	68	0-1	1-1	L2
Illinois State	0-3	.000	43	68	0-3	.000	43	68	0-1	0-2	L3
Western Illinois	0-3	.000	55	113	0-3	.000	55	113	0-2	0-1	L6
Youngstown State	0-4	.000	46	95	0-4	.000	46	95	0-2	0-2	L4

Indiana State has opted out of the Spring 2021 season

• • Media Services • •

Players of the Week

Each week a panel will select players of the week for offense, defense, newcomer, offensive line and special teams.

Statistics

Interactive school and league statistics are available, courtesy of the league's partnership with SIDEARM.

Weekly Features

The league produces weekly video segments (Two Minute Drill and The Extra Point) and a bimonthly audio podcast (First and Goal). Each is available by visiting the league's web site (valleyfootball.org) - under the Multimedia tab on the main menu bar.

www.valley-football.org



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MVFC Schedule/Results

Saturday, March 13

#3 North Dakota at Western Illinois UND, 38-21
#4 UNI at #10 Southern Illinois SIU, 17-16
Missouri State at #21 South Dakota MSU, 27-24
Youngstown State at #8 SDSU SDSU, 19-17
#22 Illinois State at #5 NDSU NDSU, 21-13

Saturday, March 20

USD at Youngstown St., 11 a.m. CT [My UTV/The CW (td)/E+]
Western Illinois at Illinois State, 11 a.m. CT [ESPN+]
#6 SDSU at #5 Southern Illinois, 12 p.m. CT [MVFC TV/ESPN+]
#2 North Dakota at #4 NDSU, 2:30 p.m. CT [NBC ND/ESPN+]
Missouri State at #10 UNI, 4 p.m. CT [Panther Sports Net/ESPN+]

Saturday, March 27

North Dakota at Youngstown State, 11 a.m. CT [MVFC TV]
North Dakota State at South Dakota, 1 p.m. CT
Illinois State at South Dakota State, 2 p.m. CT [MVFC TV]
Southern Illinois at Missouri State, 2 p.m. CT
UNI at Western Illinois, 7 p.m. CT

Friday, April 2

UNI at South Dakota, 6 p.m. CT

Saturday, April 3

Missouri State at North Dakota, 11 a.m. CT [MVFC TV]
Southern Illinois at Illinois State, 12 p.m. CT [MVFC TV]
South Dakota State at North Dakota State, 2:30 p.m. CT
Youngstown State at Western Illinois, 7 p.m. CT

4 MVFC Teams in Top 6

For just the third time in league history, and first time since 2015, four MVFC teams represent the league in the Top 6 of the national polls. League newcomer North Dakota headlines the list at No. 2, while five MVFC teams this week are in the Top 10 of the Stats Perform poll for the second-straight week, matching a league record (achieved three times prior to this season).

The MVFC also holds five of the Top 7 spots in the Massey Ratings, while the Big Sky (3) and CAA (2) comprise the rest of the Top 10.

Team	STATS	AFC	Massey	Sagarin
UND	2	2	1	8
NDSU	4	4	2	1
SIU	5	5	5	17
SDSU	6	7	4	4
UNI	10	14	7	6
ILS	rv	rv	20	22
USD	rv	rv	14	25
MSU	--	rv	22	52

Massey Ratings, Team Leaders

1. North Dakota (MVFC)
2. North Dakota State (MVFC)
3. Weber State (Big Sky)
4. South Dakota State (MVFC)
5. Southern Illinois (MVFC)
6. James Madison (CAA)
7. UNI (MVFC)
8. UC Davis (Big Sky)
9. Eastern Washington (Big Sky)
10. Delaware (CAA)

Among conferences, the MVFC is the top-rated league in the FCS (Sagarin), and four MVFC schools are in the Top 8, which includes positions 1-4-6-8.

Sagarin Rankings, Team Leaders (FCS)

1. North Dakota State
2. Weber State (Big Sky)
3. Sam Houston State (Southland)
4. South Dakota State
5. Montana (Big Sky)
6. UNI
7. James Madison (CAA)
8. North Dakota

Sagarin Rankings, Conference Leaders (FCS)

1. MISSOURI VALLEY
2. Big Sky
3. CAA Football
4. Southland



ESPN APP is MVFC Digital Home

The ESPN App curates all of ESPN's incredible content into a personalized experience unique to each fan's tastes. All MVFC home games will be available

through the App, airing either on ESPN3 or ESPN+.

Players of the Week

Offense

QB Tommy Schuster, North Dakota
6-0, 196, R-Fr., Macomb (Mich.)
Chippewa Valley High

Schuster threw for a career high 328 yards and three touchdowns in No. 3 UND's 38-21 win over Western Illinois in Macomb ... He completed over 78% of his passes to move to 5-0 in his career at UND ... His two first half touchdowns helped the Fighting Hawks jump out to an early 21-7 lead before lofting a 20-yard strike to Jake Richter to put the finishing touches on the victory.

Defense

CB Montrae Braswell, Missouri State
6-0, 185, So., Avon Park (Fla.) Avon Park High

Braswell's heroics began with a 100-yard kickoff return in the first quarter to tie the game and become the fifth Bear in school history to do so. Eight minutes later, Braswell gave the Bears the lead with a 36-yard "pick six" interception return for a score to give MSU its first lead of the game. On South Dakota's last possession, Braswell's third-down tackle with less than five minutes to go forced a USD punt, and the Bears never gave the ball back, ultimately running out the clock for their second MVFC road win of the season. Braswell finished with 6 total tackles, all solos with a pair of passes defended and two touchdowns.

Newcomer

QB Cam Miller, North Dakota State
6-1, 205, Fr., Solon (Iowa) High

Miller accounted for 118 yards of offense and led a key fourth-quarter scoring drive in NDSU's 21-13 victory over Illinois State. Playing in just his third game as a true freshman, Miller traded snaps with starter Zeb Noland in the first half and led the Bison for a majority of the second half. Miller rushed for a team-high 57 yards on 11 attempts and went 5 of 7 passing for 61 yards. His six-yard TD run with 3:39 left in the game capped a 13-play, 84-yard drive that ate up 8:13 of the final quarter.

Special Teams

PK Cole Frahm, South Dakota State
6-5, 225, Jr., Omaha (Neb.) Burke High

Frahm booted the game-winning 29-yard field goal with 31 seconds remaining to lift South Dakota State to a 19-17 victory over Youngstown State. Earlier in the game, Frahm connected on a career-long 52-yarder en route to going 2-for-3 on field goals on the day. Frahm has made a field goal in all four games this season and is 5-for-7 on the season.

Offensive Line

OG ZeVeyon Furcron, Southern Illinois
6-2, 327, Sr., Crest Hill (Ill.) Joliet Catholic

Furcron graded out at 92 percent with 5 knockdown blocks in the win over Northern Iowa. The Salukis rushed for 192 yards (4.4 average) and totaled 416 yards of offense against one of the league's top defenses.

Against the Top 25

Missouri State picked up its first win against a Top 25 opponent as the Bears won at South Dakota, 27-24, on March 13. It was one of three top-25 wins in league play this past weekend - the Conference has combined for 12-such wins this season.

MVFC Top-25 Victories This Season (12)

10-03-20	#1 NDSU vs. #11 Central Arkansas, 39-28
10-30-20	#24 SIU vs. #25 SE Missouri State, 20-17
02-19-21	#5 SDSU at #3 UNI, 24-20
02-20-21	North Dakota vs. #24 SIU, 44-21
02-27-21	South Dakota at #7 Illinois State, 27-20
02-27-21	Southern Illinois vs. #1 NDSU, 38-14
02-27-21	#14 UND vs. #3 SDSU, 28-17
03-04-21	#4 UND vs. #20 South Dakota, 21-10
03-06-21	#3 UNI vs. #15 Illinois State, 20-10
03-13-21	#10 Southern Illinois vs. #4 UNI, 17-16
03-13-21	Missouri State vs. #21 S. Dakota, 27-24
03-13-21	#5 NDSU vs. #22 Illinois State, 21-13

4-0 Starts in MVFC Play

North Dakota is off to one of its best starts since moving to Division I in 2008, going to 4-0 for the second time in the program's DI history (2008). UND is also 4-0 in league play for the first time since 2016, a year that saw the Hawks go 8-0 on the way to a Big Sky Conference title. Counting UND this year, a league team has started conference play with a 4-0 record on 38 occasions. All but one (Western Kentucky in 2005) finished second or better in the league standings. Thirty one of the 37 with 4-0 or better starts earned playoff berths, and 28 won the league title. Here's a list of league schools that have started 5-0 in Conference play; that's happened 26 times (all but two of those teams reached the playoffs.)

1985	*UNI was 5-0, won league
1987	*UNI was 6-0, won league
	Western Illinois started 5-0, finished 2nd
1988	*Western Illinois was 6-0, won league
1989	*MSU started 5-0, won league
1994	*UNI was 6-0, won league
1995	*UNI started 5-0, won league
1996	*UNI was 5-0, won league
1997	*Western Illinois was 6-0, won league
1998	*Western Illinois started 5-0, won league
1999	*Illinois State was 6-0, won league
2003	*UNI started 5-0, won league
	*Southern Illinois started 6-0, won league
2004	*Southern Illinois started 7-0, won league
2007	*UNI started 6-0, won league
2009	*Southern Illinois started 8-0, won league
	*South Dakota State started 6-0, finished 2nd
2011	*North Dakota State started 6-0, won league
	*UNI started 5-0, won league
2013	*North Dakota State started 8-0, won league
	Youngstown State started 5-0, finished 2nd
2014	*North Dakota State started 5-0, tied for title
2015	*Illinois State started 5-0, tied for title
2017	*North Dakota State started 5-0, won league
2018	*North Dakota State started 8-0, won league
2019	*North Dakota State started 8-0, won league

*playoff participant

Pressing Pause

Only three Missouri Valley football teams participated in non-conference action this past fall, with Missouri State (0-3), North Dakota State (1-0) and Southern Illinois (1-0) playing a slate of games that featured five ranked opponents. Indiana State opted out of the spring schedule (which features 40 conference games).

Conference Games Scheduled/Played: 40/18
MVC Games Postponed/Rescheduled: 2/2
Games Canceled: 0

Ranked vs. Ranked

A pair of games this past week featured two ranked MVFC teams. The league has now had 190 meetings all-time that featured two ranked MVFC teams. Of those 190 games, 52 times the meeting involved teams that were both ranked in the Top 10 at the same time. Twelve meetings have occurred in the playoffs. The home team is 110-79, while the higher-ranked team is 120-70.

One game (between Illinois State and North Dakota State in Frisco, Texas, on Jan. 10, 2015) was played at a neutral site. On Oct. 26, #1 North Dakota State beat #3 South Dakota State in what was just the fourth meeting between two MVFC schools ranked in the Top 3.

MVFC -- Two Top-3 Teams vs. Each Other

10/29/11	#2 UNI at #3 NDSU	NDSU, 27-19
10/6/12	#3 YSU at #1 NDSU	NDSU, 48-7
9/29/18	#3 SDSU at #1 NDSU	NDSU, 21-17
10/26/19	#1 NDSU at #3 SDSU	NDSU, 23-16

MVFC Preseason Poll

North Dakota State was tabbed as the Missouri Valley Football Conference pre-season favorite in a poll conducted by league coaches. NDSU has been picked first in the pre-season poll for nine-straight seasons.

North Dakota State has earned the league title for nine-straight years, four times sharing it with another league school. This year, NDSU received 101 points in the coaches vote to edge UNI (92) and SDSU (91).

1. North Dakota State	101
2. UNI	92
3. South Dakota State	91
4. Illinois State	80
5. Southern Illinois	68
6. South Dakota	52
7. North Dakota	39
8. Youngstown State	36
9. Missouri State	23
9. Western Illinois	23

Indiana State opted out of spring season

Players of the Week

Feb. 22

Offense -- RB Pierre Strong Jr., SDSU
 Defense -- LB Devon Krzanowski, North Dakota
 Special Teams -- PK Jake Reinholz, NDSU
 *Newcomer -- QB Mark Gronowski, SDSU
 Offensive Lineman -- C Nathan Nguon, UND

March 1

Offense -- QB Nic Baker, Southern Illinois
 Defense -- DE Kevin Ellis, Missouri State
 Newcomer -- LB Josh Navratil, North Dakota
 Special Teams -- P Brady Schutt, South Dakota
 Offensive Lineman -- C Chase Arends, UNI

March 8

Offense -- QB Mark Gronowski, South Dakota State
 Defense -- LB Spencer Cuvelier, UNI
 Newcomer -- TB Jaleel McLaughlin, Youngstown St.
 *Special Teams -- P Garret Wegner, North Dakota St.
 Offensive Lineman -- RT Garret Greenfield, SDSU

March 15

Offense -- QB Tommy Schuster, North Dakota
 Defense -- CB Montrae Braswell, Missouri State
 Newcomer -- QB Cam Miller, North Dakota State
 Special Teams -- PK Cole Frahm, South Dakota St.
 Offensive Lineman -- OG ZeVeyon Furcron, SIU

*denotes National Player of the Week

Fall MVFC Performers of the Week

S15 -- LB Tylar Wiltz, Missouri State
 S29 -- TB/WR Kevon Latulas, Missouri State
 O6 -- FB Hunter Luepke, North Dakota State
 O6 -- LB James Kaczor, North Dakota State
 O20 -- TB Jeremiah Wilson, Missouri State
 N3 -- RB Javon Williams Jr., Southern Illinois
 N3 -- Blake Parzych, Southern Illinois
 N3 -- PK Nico Gualdoni, Southern Illinois

One-Point Conference Games

Including Southern Illinois' 17-16 victory against visiting UNI on March 13, 2021, there have been 40 league games decided by a single point. In league history UNI has more one-point wins (12) in Missouri Valley Football Conference games than any other league member. Southern, now with seven, is tied for second. The SIU-UNI game this past weekend marked the first league game decided by one point since October 2016.

MVFC School Records in One-Point League Games

Eastern Illinois (4-6)	South Dakota (0-1)
Illinois State (1-4)	South Dakota State (1-0)
Indiana State (4-2)	Southern Illinois (7-8)
Missouri State (4-5)	Western Illinois (7-3)
North Dakota State (1-1)	Western Kentucky (0-2)
UNI (11-6)	Youngstown State (1-3)

Home Streak at 31 Games

North Dakota State is on a school-record 31-game home winning streak, which is tied for fourth-longest in FCS history behind Georgia Southern (39, 38), Eastern Kentucky (34), and Middle Tennessee State (31). It is the longest active home winning streak in Division I and a new Missouri Valley Football Conference record, topping NDSU's 26-game home winning streak from 2012-15.

NCAA Leaders, Home Win Streaks (Active)

31 -- North Dakota State
 15 -- Eastern Washington
 14 -- James Madison
10 -- North Dakota

Rare Air for the Bears

With last week's win at South Dakota, Missouri State improved to 2-0 in MVFC road games this season. This week at UNI, the Bears are not only looking to pick up a third conference road win for the first time since 2009, but also looking for their first win in Cedar Falls since 1998. Coach Bobby Petrino's squad has allowed just 14 second-half points in MVFC games this spring and is +3 in turnovers.

Deep in the Woods

CB Charles Woods of Illinois State did it all for the Redbirds Saturday at the Fargo-dome. The junior from Dallas recorded a pair of interceptions and was also credited with another pass breakup against NDSU. He also added eight tackles in the contest, including one TFL against the Bison. Woods now has six career interceptions for the Redbirds and 27 career passes defended.

McLaughlin Shines Again

For the second straight week, TB Jaleel McLaughlin of Youngstown State rushed for more than 100 yards and had two scores for the Penguins. McLaughlin rushed for 122 yards on 26 attempts and had a pair of touchdowns in YSU's tough 19-17 loss at South Dakota State. He scored on a 42-yard run in the first quarter and added a one-yard score in the fourth. In the week prior, he rushed for 124 yards and had two TDs vs. Southern Illinois.

Camp and Bell

South Dakota true freshman quarterback Carson Camp is coming off his best passing performance of the young year. He completed 22-of-34 passes for 339 yards and a score. Camp is now the second-leading passer in the Valley at 251 yards per game. Redshirt freshman Carter Bell has been his top target in all three games. Bell has 13 catches for 227 yards and two scores. He is the fourth-leading receiver in the Valley at 75 yards per game.

2020-21 Valley Football Teams in the Top 25

Team	Pre	F22	M1	M8	M15
Illinois State	9	7	15	22	rv
Indiana St.	--	--	--	--	--
Missouri St.	--	--	--	--	rv
UND	rv	14	4	3	2
NDSU	1	1	6	5	4
UNI	3	5	3	4	10
S. Dakota	--	--	20	21	rv
SDSU	5	3	8	8	6
S. Illinois	24	rv	11	10	5
W. Illinois	--	--	--	--	--
Youngstown	rv	rv	--	--	--

*Rank represents highest position in the two polls (STATS or AFCA FCS Coaches polls)

New Interceptions Streak

After having its 13-game streak with an interception come to an end in the season opener, the SDSU defense has started a new streak with six interceptions over the past three games. Linebacker Preston Tetzlaff picked off a pass in the fourth quarter at North Dakota on Feb. 27, followed by a three-interception performance by the Jack-rabbits March 6 against Western Illinois and a two-INT afternoon March 13 versus Western Illinois. Joshua Manchighiah recorded interceptions in each of the last two games to take over the team lead. SDSU has picked off a pass in 22 of its last 24 games dating back to the 2018 season.

Best Offensive Output

Despite the loss at No. 10 Southern Illinois, the UNI offense showed some promise with its best yardage outing of the season. QB Will McElvain was 10-of-22 for 254 yards and no interceptions. The Panthers recorded the three longest plays from scrimmage of the year with a 59-yard pass to Deion McShane, the 52-yard strike to Quan Hampton and another 52-yard pass in the first half to Tysen Kershaw.

Hampton had four receptions for 91 yards and leads UNI with 21 receptions for 270 yards so far this season. His 52-yard reception set up a potential game-winning FG.

Thriller in Carbondale

For the first time in school history, Southern Illinois has beaten two Top-5 opponents in the same season. Two weeks after Southern took down No. 1 North Dakota State, SIU validated that win with a 17-16 victory over No. 4 Northern Iowa in a thriller at Saluki Stadium on Saturday. Trailing, 13-0 at halftime, and without its top two quarterbacks, the Salukis (4-1, 3-1) battled back in the second half to take the lead, 17-16, on a 3-yard touchdown pass from third-string QB Stone Labanowitz to Jerron Rollins with 9:43 remaining. UNI missed a 30 yarder wide left with seven seconds to go, setting off a wild celebration on the Saluki sideline.

Passing Fancy

WIU QB Connor Sampson completed 33 passes against No. 3 North Dakota, the third most in Western's single-game history. He currently holds the top three marks after posting 34 in the season-opener against Missouri State and 34 at Illinois State a year ago. He finished Saturday's game 33-for-47 with 336 yards. After the loss, Western Illinois is now 45-88-1 all-time against ranked opponents.

Stopping the Rush

Led by North Dakota (15th), six MVFC schools rank in the Top 34 in fewest rushing yards allowed per game. Among schools that have played more than one game, the Fighting Hawks rank seventh-best with their 85.2 yards per game figure. The 85.2 per game figure ranks as the second-best all-time in MVFC history (behind only Illinois State's 80.5 ypg rush defense figure in 1986).

NCAA Leaders, Rushing Defense (YPG)

Team	G	YPG
15. North Dakota	4	85.2
17. North Dakota State	4	88.8
25. Illinois State	3	108.0
27. Missouri State	7	114.1
33. UNI	4	120.8
34. South Dakota State	4	122.0

In-State Clash

Longtime North Central Conference rivals North Dakota State and North Dakota meet for the first time as Missouri Valley Football Conference opponents this Saturday, March 20. Game time is 2:30 p.m. at Gate City Bank Field at the Fargodome. This is the first conference matchup between the two football programs since 2003, NDSU's final season in the NCC. The Bison and Fighting Hawks played as Division I non-conference opponents in 2015 and 2019.

Freshman Contributions

North Dakota State has played 13 true freshmen and 14 redshirt freshmen at the halfway point of the eight-game conference season. Those 27 players have accounted for 21 percent of the total snaps played by the Bison this spring. Add in another 10 sophomores, and 36 percent of Bison playing time has been filled by underclassmen in four spring games.

In the Clutch

Freshman quarterback Mark Gronowski has led South Dakota State on two game-winning, fourth-quarter drives in his first four career starts. On game-winning drives Feb. 19 at Northern Iowa and March 13 versus Youngstown State, Gronowski was a combined 9-for-10 passing for 123 yards and a touchdown. His top target on those drives was sophomore tight end Zach Heins, who recorded a 43-yard catch and run to set up the game-winning touchdown at UNI, followed by catches of 39 and 16 yards that led to the game-winning field goal versus YSU.

Double-Digit Victories

UND has not made its fans sweat through the first four games of the season, claiming each of its wins by at least 10 points. In fact, the 11-point margin of victory over then-No. 3 South Dakota State is the closest game the Hawks have played all year and the only game to be a one possession deficit in the fourth quarter.

Hoosman Leads UNI Rush Attack

RB Tyler Hoosman tallied 18 carries for 73 yards and a touchdown in UNI's 17-16 loss to Southern Illinois. He had a long run of 18 yards. He leads UNI with 204 yards rushing after playing in three games.

What's the Rush

Seven MVFC schools rank in the Top 50 in rushing yards per game in the FCS, led by North Dakota, which ranks 12th overall, averaging 217.8 yards per game on the ground.

UND's Otis Weah leads the way for the league as he ranks seventh-best in the FCS with 110.2 yards per game. South Dakota State's Pierre Strong Jr. ranks in the Top 25 as well, averaging 89.5 yards per game.

NCAA Leaders, Rushing Yards Per Game

Team (Conf.)	G	PPG
1. Davidson (Pioneer)	2	282.0
2. James Madison (CAA)	3	265.3
3. Nicholls (Southland)	4	251.2
4. UIW (Southland)	2	247.0
5. Northwestern St. (Southland)	2	243.0

12. North Dakota (MVFC)	4	217.8
18. North Dakota State (MVFC)	5	210.8
26. Southern Illinois (MVFC)	5	182.8
29. South Dakota St. (MVFC)	4	175.2
47. Illinois State (MVFC)	3	136.0
49. Missouri State (MVFC)	7	131.4
50. Youngstown State (MVFC)	4	130.2

NCAA Leaders, Rushing Yards Per Game

Player (Team)	G	PPG
1. Julius Chestnut, Sacred Heart	1	168.0
2. Kevin Brown, UIW	2	156.5
3. Narii Gaither, Gardner-Webb	2	131.0
4. Karl Mofo, Albany (NY)	2	117.0
4. Kavon Samuels, Butler	1	117.0

7. Otis Weah, North Dakota	4	110.2
22. Pierre Strong, South Dakota St.	4	89.5