



2017-18 OVC Basketball Media Day Women's Information Packet

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OHIO VALLEY CONFERENCE

Belmont Picked to Win 2017-18 OVC Women's Basketball Title; Bruins' Maggard and McCabe named Preseason Co-Player of the Year

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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EVANSVILLE, Ind. - Belmont has been picked to win the 2017-18 Ohio Valley Conference women's basketball title in a preseason poll of the league's head coaches and sports information directors. The Bruins earned 242 points, including 22 first-place votes, while **SIUE** earned 199 points for a second-place predicted finish. **UT Martin** picked up the final two first-place nods and 198 points to be selected third. **Morehead State** is picked to finish fourth with 192 points while **Tennessee Tech** is selected to finish fifth with 133 points. Rounding out the poll are **Austin Peay** (120), **Jacksonville State** (111), **Murray State** (101), **Southeast Missouri** (101), **Eastern Kentucky** (83), **Eastern Illinois** (64) and **Tennessee State** (38).

Belmont is coming off a season in which it went 27-6 overall and 16-0 in the OVC to capture its first OVC regular-season title. The Bruins earned the top seed in the OVC Tournament and defeated Eastern Kentucky, 94-64, in the championship final to win its second straight tourney crown. Belmont made its third NCAA appearance, falling to Kentucky in the first round. The Bruins will be under the new direction of **Bart Brooks**, who comes to Belmont after spending the last 11 seasons on the staff of DePaul. Brooks will have four starters among 10 letterwinners returning this season including 2017-18 OVC Preseason Co-Player of the Year in senior center **Sally McCabe** and junior guard **Darby Maggard**. McCabe, a native of Mt. Juliet, Tenn., earned her second straight OVC Defensive Player of the Year award last season. She led the Conference with 95 blocks (2.5 bpg) while also ranking third with 7.6 rebounds per outing. McCabe recorded 12.5 points per game in 2016-17. A product of Larwill, Ind., Maggard was named to the All-OVC First Team last season after finishing with 14.5 points per game and a league-leading 48.7 three-point field goal percentage. Also returning this year is senior guard **Kylee Smith**. A native of Alpharetta, Ga., Smith was earned Preseason All-OVC honors this year after being named to the All-Conference first team last season. She recorded 15.9 points and 5.2 rebounds per game last year.

SIUE went 14-17 overall and 9-7 in the OVC to finish third last year. The Cougars earned the third seed in the OVC Tournament and fell in the semifinals to Eastern Kentucky. **Paula Buscher** enters her sixth year at the helm of SIUE and will have all five starters among eight players returning from last year's team. **Donshel Beck** (St. Louis, Mo.), a senior guard, will be back on the court this season. Beck, who earned All-OVC Second Team honors last year, ranked among league leaders with 14.6 points and 7.5 rebounds per game in 2016-17. Beck was also named to the 2017-18 Preseason All-OVC team. Also returning are senior guard **Lauren White** and senior guard/forward **Gwen Adams**. White, a native of Edwardsville, Ill., averaged 12.0 points last season while recording 44 steals. A product of Ferguson, Mo., Adams led the league with a 91.9 free throw percentage, going 113 for 123 from the line last year.

UT Martin finished in a tie for fourth place last season after going 12-19 overall and 8-8 in the league. The Skyhawks earned the fourth seeded in the OVC Tournament where they made it to the semifinals before falling to top-seeded Belmont. **Kevin McMillan**, the second longest tenured coach in the OVC, is entering his ninth season at the helm of UT Martin. He will have four starters among six players returning from last year. Among the returnees are senior forward **Ashton Feldhaus** (Richmond, Ky.), sophomore guard **Kendall Spray** (Lebanon, Tenn.) and junior guard **Myah Taylor** (Dyersburg, Tenn.) Feldhaus, who was named to the All-OVC Second Team and All-Newcomer squad last year, recorded 11.0 points and 5.1 rebounds each time out in 2016-17. Spray, who was named the 2016-17 OVC Freshman of the Year, led all freshman with 12.5 points per game to rank 15th in the league last year. She finished second in the OVC with 2.9 three-point field goals made per game while ranking seventh with a 38.4 three-point field goal percentage. Taylor, who was also named to the All-OVC Second Team, ranked among league-leaders with 12.1 points per game while also recording a 43.0 field goal percentage last season. Feldhaus, Spray and Taylor were all named to the 2017-18 Preseason All-OVC team.

The 2017-18 regular-season begins on Nov. 10 with Conference play starting Dec. 28. Ten different teams have won a regular-season title with Tennessee Tech leading the way with 18.

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2017-18 All-OVC Preseason Women's Basketball Team

The 2017-18 Preseason All-OVC team is headlined by Belmont junior guard **Darby Maggard** and senior center **Sally McCabe** who shared the Preseason Player of the Year honor.

The preseason squad features student-athletes from seven different teams. Belmont and UT Martin lead the way with three selections each. Eastern Illinois, Morehead State, Murray State, SIUE and Tennessee Tech each had one pick.

Maggard was an All-OVC First Team pick last season. The Larwill, Ind, native led the league with a 48.7 3-point field goal percentage while also ranking eighth with 14.5 points per game. Maggard also made 49.1 percent of her field goals and ranked second with 5.7 assists per game last season.

McCabe, a native of Alpharetta, Ga., earned her second straight OVC Defensive Player of the Year honor last season. She led the league with 95 total blocks and 2.9 blocks per game in 2016-17. McCabe also scored 12.5 points and brought down 7.9 rebounds per game last year.

Earning Preseason All-Conference team honors this year after being named to the All-OVC First Team last season were: Belmont senior guard **Kylee Smith** (15.9 ppg, 5.2 rpg); Eastern Illinois senior guard **Grace Lennox** (16.3 ppg, 43.9 FG%); Murray State senior guard/forward **Ke'Shunan James** (20.5 ppg, 7.3 rpg); and Tennessee Tech senior guard **Yaktavia Hickson** (16.9 ppg, 4.0 rpg).

Rounding out the preseason squad after earning All-OVC Second Team honors last season are: UT Martin senior forward **Ashton Feldhaus** (11.0 ppg, 5.1 rpg), sophomore guard **Kendall Spray** (12.5 ppg, 2.9 3-PT FG made per game) and junior guard **Myah Taylor** (12.1 ppg, 43.0 FG%); Morehead State junior guard **Miranda Crockett** (11.2 ppg, 4.9 rpg); and SIUE senior guard **Donschel Beck** (14.5 ppg, 7.5 rpg).

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2017-18 OVC Preseason Women's Basketball Notes

Let the Season Begin: The 2017-18 regular-season begins on Nov. 10 with Conference play starting Dec. 28. Ten different teams have won a regular-season title with Tennessee Tech leading the way with 18.

OVC Games on TV: The Ohio Valley Conference will have one game on TV this season. The match-up between SIUE and UT Martin on Feb. 15 will be on ESPNU. Additionally, the entire OVC Women's Basketball Tournament will be available on ESPN3.

2016-17 in Review: Belmont won its first OVC regular-season title and its second straight league tournament crown. The top-seeded Bruins defeated No. 7 Eastern Kentucky, 94-64, in the championship game. Belmont and Morehead State earned postseason bids at the Bruins were the automatic bid to the NCAA Tournament and the Eagles earned the league's spot in the WNIT. Belmont fell to Kentucky, 73-70 in the first round of the NCAA Tourney while Morehead State fell to Middle Tennessee, 67-58, in the first round of the WNIT. Belmont's Cameron Newbauer won his first OVC Coach of the Year honor after leading his team to a perfect 16-0 league record and its first regular-season title. Austin Peay's Tearra Banks was named the Player of the Year after recording 19.0 points and 8.0 rebounds per game. Belmont's Sally McCabe picked up her second straight Defensive Player of the Year honor as she led the league with 2.9 blocks per game. UT Martin's Kendall Spray earned Freshman of the Year honors after she recorded 2.9 three-point field goals per game.

Regular-Season Champions: With Belmont winning last year's regular-season crown, 10 different teams have won a regular-season title. Jacksonville State, Morehead State and SIUE are the only current members that have not won a regular-season title.

Under New Direction: Four OVC women's basketball will have new head coaches this year. Belmont will be under that new direction of Bart Brooks while Eastern Illinois' welcomes Matt Bollant. First -year head coach Rechelle Turner takes over the reigns at Murray State while Tennessee State will be under the new direction of Jessica Kern.

OVC Championship Moving to Evansville: The 2018 Ohio Valley Conference Women's Basketball Championship will be held at the Ford Center in Evansville, Ind. for the first time. It marks just the second time since the women's tournament moved to a neutral site that it will be held outside the city of Nashville. In 2002, the tourney was held in Louisville. Beginning with the 2011 OVC Women's Basketball Championship the bracket gave the No. 1 and No. 2 seeds double byes to the semifinals and the No. 3 and No. 4 seeds single byes to the quarterfinals. The schedule for the 2018 Women's Basketball Championship will see the No. 1 vs. No. 8 and No. 2 vs. No. 7 seeds playing on Wednesday, with the teams winning those games having an off day on Thursday when the first round games continue with No. 3 vs. No. 6 and No. 4 vs. No. 5 matchups. The semifinals will remain on Friday with the Championship Game still being played on Saturday.

OVC Digital Network: After a successful first five years that saw over 3,500 events streamed for free and over 2,000,000 views, the OVC Digital Network Presented by Delta Dental of Tennessee (www.OVCDigitalNetwork.com) is gearing up for year number six. Fans are able to view their favorite teams play on any computer, tablet or smart phone without any registration or downloads. Over the past two years the OVCDN has launched several features that has made viewing even more user-friendly. A DVR function was incorporated into the stream allowing the viewer to rewind and/or fast forward to any point of the contest while it is live. In addition there is an "instant archiving" feature that allows fans to watch a replay of the contest immediately after the event concludes. The OVC also launched a channel for the OVC Digital Network on the Roku Streaming Player, giving viewers an easier option to watch the network directly on their television sets. Roku is a series of digital media player set-top boxes manufactured by Roku, Inc. that provide over-the-top content in the form of channels via a wired or Wi-Fi connection. Roku currently offers a variety of streaming set-top boxes, streaming sticks and a co-branded Roku smart television. Last year nearly 10,000 Roku users subscribed (for free) to the OVC Digital Network channel. The OVCDN is a partnership with SIDEARM Sports, which also hosts OVCSports.com. Prior to the 2012-13 season the OVC rebranded its Digital Network as it switched to a free model that provides high-definition video to fans on any computer, tablet or smart phone. The service also requires no registration as fans can simply log onto the site to access the streams. The 2016-17 season featured over 800 total events with 500,000 viewers watching the sports of football, basketball, soccer, volleyball, softball and baseball. Schools also produced and aired coaches shows, graduation ceremonies and other ancillary events. The year marked the largest number of streamed events and viewers in the history of the digital network. The 2017-18 season will feature the same commitment to high quality video productions and a consistent feel across the OVC. Schools will continue to air every home football and men's and women's basketball contest and also branch out in airing more volleyball, soccer, baseball and softball contests in addition to other ancillary events.

2017-18 OVC Women's Basketball Predicted Order of Finish

(Selected by OVC Head Basketball Coaches and Sports Information Directors)

<u>Order of Finish</u>	<u>Points</u>
1. Belmont (22 first-place votes)	242
2. SIUE	199
3. UT Martin (Two first-place votes)	198
4. Morehead State	192
5. Tennessee Tech	133
6. Austin Peay	120
7. Jacksonville State	111
t8. Murray State	101
t8. Southeast Missouri	101
10. Eastern Kentucky	83
11. Eastern Illinois	64
12. Tennessee State	38

(*Schools were not allowed to rank their own team. 11 points awarded for a first-place vote, 10 for second, etc.)

2017-18 Preseason All-Ohio Valley Conference Women's Basketball Team

(Selected by OVC Head Basketball Coaches and Sports Information Directors)

Preseason OVC Co-Player of the Year: Darby Maggard, Belmont; Sally McCabe, Belmont

<u>NAME, SCHOOL</u>	<u>POS.</u>	<u>HT.</u>	<u>CL.</u>	<u>HOMETOWN</u>	<u>KEY STATS FROM 2015-16</u>
Ke'Shunan James, Murray State*	F/G	6-1	Sr.	Jackson, Tenn.	20.5 ppg, 7.3 rpg
Darby Maggard, Belmont*	G	5-5	Jr.	Larwill, Ind.	14.5 ppg, 48.7 3-pt FG%
Kylee Smith, Belmont*	G	5-11	Sr.	Alpharetta, Ga.	15.9 ppg, 5.2 rpg
Grace Lennox, Eastern Illinois*	G	5-4	Sr.	Hobart, Tasmania	16.3 ppg, 43.9 FG%
Yaktavia Hickson, Tennessee Tech*	G	5-11	Sr.	Atlanta, Ga.	16.9 ppg, 4.0 rpg
Sally McCabe, Belmont*	C	6-3	Sr.	Mt. Juliet, Tenn.	12.5 ppg, 95 blocks
Donschel Beck, SIUE#	G	5-9	Sr.	St. Louis, Mo.	14.5 ppg, 7.5 rpg
Miranda Crockett, Morehead State#	G	5-8	Jr.	Martinsville, Va.	11.2 ppg, 4.9 rpg
Ashton Feldhaus, UT Martin#%	F	6-2	Sr.	Richmond, Ky.	11.0 ppg, 5.1 rpg
Kendall Spray, UT Martin#%	G	5-7	So.	Lebanon, Tenn.	12.5 ppg, 41.9 FG%
Myah Taylor, UT Martin #	G	5-10	Jr.	Dyersburg, Tenn.	12.1 ppg, 43.0 FG%

* - 1st team All-OVC in 2016-17

- 2nd team All-OVC in 2016-17

% - OVC All-Newcomer team in 2016-17