MEN'S BASKETBALL MIAA CAPSULES

Central Missouri
2009-10 record: 27-4 (16-4)
Advanced to regional final

There is little doubt that the 2010-11 season will be a rebound for the Mules after losing their top four scorers.

The team lost MIAA Player of the Year Sanijay Watts, who led the conference in scoring (21.7), rebounding (9.5) and shooting percentage (.573). Of their top four scorers from last season, the Mules lost an average of 57.3 points per game.

A positive is the Mules still have head coach Kim Anderson at the helm — one of the most successful coaches in MIAA history.

Fort Hays State
2009-10 record: 23-7 (16-4)
Advanced to NCAA tourney

Fort Hays, ranked first in the preseason coaches poll, is primed to build off its 23-7 record last year. The team finished second in the conference with a 14-1 record at home.

The Tigers return their top two scorers, senior guards Dominique Jones and Corbin Kuntzsch. But it's the strength of the defense that carries the team. Hays led the conference last season in scoring defense (63.6 points/game) and scoring margin (+13.7).

Nebraska-Omaha
2009-10 record: 22-9 (12-8)
Advanced to NCAA tourney

Nebraska-Omaha might have the best returning player in the MIAA. Senior guard Tyler Bullock averaged 19.0 points last year, second in the conference. He tacked on 100 assists and an .856 free throw percentage.

Bullock will have to lead the team without fellow guard Andrew Bridger. Bridger led the conference in assists and was second for UNO in scoring. UNO narrowly defeated Washburn for the MIAA crown 69-67.

Missouri Western
2009-10 record: 18-12 (12-8)
Advanced to NCAA tourney

Missouri Western was eliminated in the second round of the MIAA tournament but still rode its regular season success to a playoff berth. The Griffons then lost to Central Missouri in the first round, 59-78.

Western is safely in the top half of the conference in both polls entering the season, although the Griffons did not garner any first-place votes. This could be because the team relied on close victories for success last year — it had only a +0.2 scoring margin. Also, the team lost two all-conference players and one MIAA all-defensive player in the offseason.

Southwest Baptist
2009-10 record: 20-11 (11-9)

The most important thing to know about Southwest Baptist is its loss of senior forward Matt Rogers. Rogers, who recently signed with the Charlotte Bobcats, wrecked havoc on opponents the past four years and was a repeat first-team All-MIAA player.

Rogers would have been first in the conference in scoring and second in rebounds had he qualified. The loss of Rogers and Thijin Moses (17 points/game) bumped the Bearcats down to No. 6 in the preseason rankings.

Missouri Southern
2009-10 record: 17-11 (11-9)

The Lions return two second-team All-MIAA players and earned a first-place vote in the coaches' poll after finishing sixth in the conference last season.

All-MIAA players senior Skyler Bowlin and junior Jason Adams will again lead the team. Bowlin was second in the MIAA in assists and 13th in scoring last season. Meanwhile, Adams put up 18.7 points per game — third best in the conference. He also was fifth best in rebounds.

Emporia State
2009-10 record: 14-15 (9-11)

The Emporia men's team might not have the pedigree of the women, but a squad laden with eight seniors could help close the gap. The Hornets have only five players who are not seniors.

The team lost its top two leading scorers, Tim Niles and Lamar Wilbern, from a team that finished in the bottom half of the MIAA in all major statistical categories last season.

Washburn
2009-10 record:16-14 (8-12)

The Ichabods return their top three scorers from an 8-12 MIAA campaign last year. Leading the way is senior forward De'Andre Washington, who was an honorable mention All-MIAA selection. Washington averaged 16.7 points last year.

Also in the mix is junior guard William McNeill (12.7) and senior forward Logan Stutz (11.3).

Northwest Missouri
2009-10 record: 12-15 (7-13)

After beginning last season with four non-conference victories, the Bearcats strung together wins only once the rest of the season. The team split against Truman, both games within a four-point margin.

One of Northwest's best players is DeShaun Cooper, who was the MIAA Freshman of the Year. Cooper was fourth in the conference in assists and averaged more than 10 points.

Pittsburg State
2009-10 record: 9-18 (3-17)

The Pittsburg State men's team could be considered Truman's top rival the past two years. Two years ago, the teams split in two close games, and last season Truman swept the season series — one of those a 77-63 win at Pershing Arena.

Pitt and Truman are 10th and 11th, respectively, in both polls, which makes the Gorillas the first team the 'Dogs must beat to make the postseason. Like Truman, the Gorillas are balanced, with five players last year averaging more than eight points per game.

Coaches' poll

1. Fort Hays
2. Central Missouri
3. Nebraska-Omaha

T4. Missouri Southern

T4. Washburn

6. Missouri Western
7. Southwest Baptist
8. Emporia State
9. Northwest Missouri
10. Pittsburg State
11. Truman
12. Lincoln

Where they finished

	MIAA	OVR
1. UCM	18-2	27-4
2. FHSU	16-4	23-7
3. UNO	12-8	22-9
4. MWSU	12-8	18-12
5. SBU	11-9	20-11
6. MSSU	11-9	17-11
7. ESU	9-11	14-15
8. WU	8-12	16-14
9. NWSU	7-13	12-15
10. PSU	3-17	9-18
11. Truman	**3-17**	**5-22**

Lincoln
2009-10 record: 4-22

Lincoln University comes in as somewhat of a question mark, having not played in the MIAA since 1999. Still, their last-place preseason ranking is warranted. The Blue Tigers finished 5-22 last year, including a 0-13 away mark, while playing an easier schedule than what they will see in the MIAA.

Lincoln lost many of its top scorers in the offseason, including three who averaged more than 10 points last season. Many of their players this season are new to the team.

File Photos

Left: Northwest Missouri's DeShaun Cooper, the reigning MIAA Freshman of the Year, works against sophomore guard Tom Norton.
Right: Missouri Southern's Skyler Bowlin, the reigning MIAA Defensive Player of the Year, guards senior guard Alex Henderson.

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