



NEW JERSEY ATHLETIC CONFERENCE

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KEAN SELECTED AS NJAC BASEBALL FAVORITE IN PRESEASON POLL OF LEAGUE HEAD COACHES

Pitman, NJ—After capturing the 2007 NCAA Division III National Championship, Kean University has been selected as the 2008 preseason baseball favorite in the New Jersey Athletic Conference. The defending national champion Cougars, who finished their 2007 campaign with an overall record of 43-8, are seeking their second conference title since the inception of the NJAC baseball championship back in 1958.

Kean was selected to finish first on five-of-the-ten ballots cast by the league's head coaches. Under the direction of 2007 NJAC Coach of the Year Neil Ioviero, the Cougars have posted an overall record of 281-125-2 during his 11 seasons in Union. Kean captured the 2007 NJAC regular season championship with a 15-3 conference mark and advanced to the NJAC Tournament championship game. The Cougars return four all-conference players from its national championship squad including senior catcher Derek Gianakas, senior second baseman Maikel De La Rosa, senior third baseman Ryan Clark, and senior outfielder Dan Mattonelli.

Montclair State University was selected to finish second and received four first place votes. The Red Hawks posted a 24-18 overall record in 2007 and placed third in the conference race with a 12-6 league mark. The longest-tenured NJAC baseball coach now in his 21st year at the helm of the Red Hawk program, Norm Schoenig has guided MSU to a 583-300-10 overall mark. Montclair returns five all-conference players from its 2007 squad including senior outfielder Rob Bowness, sophomore right-handed pitcher Jesus Castano, senior first baseman Lou Politan, senior catcher Jeff Miller, and senior right-handed pitcher Jairo Mendez.

Rowan University, which finished its 2007 campaign with a 23-17 overall record while placing fifth in the NJAC with a 10-8 league mark, was selected to place third and received one first place vote. Profs' head coach Juan Ranero has produced an overall coaching record of 274-209-2, including a mark of 165-106-1 during two different coaching stints at Rowan. The Profs return a pair of all-conference performers from 2007 in junior third baseman Tom Ready and senior catcher Robert Fox.

Three-time defending NJAC champions The College of New Jersey, under the direction of new first-year head coach Dean Glus, was selected to place fourth. In 2007, the Lions posted a 34-11 overall mark and placed second in the NJAC regular season with a 14-4 conference record. TCNJ captured its third consecutive NJAC Tournament championship in 2007 and advanced to the NCAA Boyertown regional as the league's automatic qualifier. The Lions return a trio of all-conference performers from their NJAC championship squad including senior right-handed pitcher Mike Oliver, junior shortstop Jeff Toth, and senior left-handed pitcher Bob Buskett.

2008 NJAC Baseball Preseason Coaches Poll	
1.	Kean (5)
2.	Montclair State (4)
3.	Rowan (1)
4.	The College of New Jersey
5.	Richard Stockton (<i>dark horse</i>)
6.	Ramapo
7.	William Paterson
8.	Rutgers-Camden
9.	Rutgers-Newark
10.	New Jersey City
<i>First Place Votes In Parentheses</i>	

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NJAC Preseason Baseball Coaches Poll Release Continued.....

The coaches' dark horse selection, Richard Stockton College, was selected to place fifth. The Ospreys, who captured a share of the 2007 ECAC Metro Championship, posted a 22-14-1 overall record last season and earned a berth in the NJAC Tournament via a sixth place regular season finish with a 9-8-1 conference mark. Under the leadership of sixth-year head coach Marty Kavanagh, the Ospreys have posted an overall record of 80-92-3. Stockton returns one all-conference performer from its ECAC Co-Championship squad in junior outfielder Chris Discher.

Ramapo College, which also earned a share of the 2007 ECAC Metro Championship, was selected to place sixth. The Roadrunners posted an overall mark of 29-13 in 2007 and earned a fourth place finish in the NJAC regular season with an 11-7 league record. Roadrunners' head coach Rich Martin has produced an overall coaching record of 397-332-1, including a record of 153-123-1 in seven seasons at Ramapo. Ramapo returns four all-league performers from its ECAC Co-Championship squad including senior outfielder Nick Sbarra, senior outfielder Jairo Jimenez, junior catcher John Callandrello, and the 2007 NJAC Rookie of the Year in sophomore second baseman Joe Cacchiola.

William Paterson University, under the direction of new first-year head coach Mike Lauterhahn, was selected to place seventh. The Pioneers posted a 19-15-2 overall record in 2007 and placed eighth in the NJAC with a 6-11-1 conference mark. Paterson returns one all-conference performer from last season in sophomore outfielder Mike Guadango.

Rutgers University-Camden, under the direction of new first-year head coach John Wink, was selected to place eighth. The Scarlet Raptors finished 2007 with an overall record of 15-24 and placed 10th in the league with a 2-16 NJAC mark.

Rutgers University-Newark was selected to place ninth. The Scarlet Raiders posted a seventh place finish in the NJAC in 2007 with a 7-11 league mark en route to a 12-26 overall record. Raiders' head coach Mark Rizzi has produced an overall coaching record of 110-138-3, including a mark of 100-121-3 in six seasons at Rutgers-Newark.

Under the direction of new first-year head coach Eric Alvarez, New Jersey City University was tapped to place tenth. The Gothic Knights return one all-conference performer from its 2007 squad which finished 15-22 overall and ninth in the NJAC with a 3-15 league mark in senior shortstop Jose Fulgencio.

Non-conference play in the NJAC will get underway on Friday, February 22 with Rowan, Rutgers-Camden, and Rutgers-Newark all in action. League play will begin 33 days later on Thursday, March 27.

The top six conference regular season finishers will advance to the double-elimination 2008 NJAC Championship Tournament which will begin with play at campus sites on Thursday, May 1. All six of the participating teams will then travel to Bears & Eagles Riverfront Stadium in Newark where the remainder of the tournament will be conducted from Saturday, May 3 through Monday, May 5. The winner of the NJAC Tournament receives the conference's automatic qualification to the NCAA Division III National Championship Tournament.