



Ohio Athletic Conference
 4990 Mahoning Ave. Suite C
 P.O. Box 4656
 Austintown, Ohio 44515
 Phone 330-259-9090 • Fax 330-259-9091
 E-mail: oaac@oaac.org • www.oac.org

Timothy W. Gleason, Commissioner

For Immediate Release

Contact: Lindsay Rickel

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CAPITAL MEN AND WOMEN PICKED TO FINISH FIRST IN OAC PRESEASON BASKETBALL POLLS

Austintown, OH- Capital men and women were tabbed as the favorites in preseason voting by the Ohio Athletic Conference (OAC) coaches.

Capital men tallied 80 points (eight first place votes) in the men's coaches' poll, followed by Heidelberg with 61 points (one first place vote) and John Carroll with 60 points (one first place).

Capital was the 2006-2007 OAC regular-season co-champion, along with John Carroll with a 13-5 record and claimed the 2007 OAC Tournament title. The Crusaders finished last season with a 19-9 record.

The Crusaders return 11 letterwinners and five starters this season. They will look to junior wing **Nate Stahl (St. Henry)**, the only underclassman named to the All-OAC First Team, who led the team in scoring and was second in rebounding to headline the lineup. Also returning will be senior forward **Steve Kyser (Sylvania/Southview)** and junior wing **Ryan Wood (Pickerington/Pickerington Central)**. Kyser led the team in rebounding and was second in scoring, while Wood was third in scoring and made 47 three-pointers a year ago.

"It's a compliment to our program and players that the coaches in the OAC have selected us first in the preseason poll," said 14-year Capital Head Coach Damon Goodwin. "We understand, however, that there are many capable and tough basketball teams that we'll compete with throughout this season. A number of teams in the OAC are capable of winning the league title and our focus is to be one of those teams competing for the OAC title at the end of the season."

On the women's side, Capital tallied 77 points (five first place votes) by the women's coaches, followed by Baldwin-Wallace with 71 points (four first place votes) and Wilmington with 65 points (one first place). The Crusaders finished second last season in the Conference with a 14-4 record and a 20-7 overall mark.

Capital returns nine letterwinners and four starters from last year's squad. The top three scorers all are back led, by All-OAC First Team forward **Caitlin Elsass (Batavia/Clermont Northeastern)**, who led the team in scoring and rebounding. Along with Elsass are guards junior **Caitlin Graessle (Galloway/Bishop Ready)** and sophomore **Kristen Richardson (Oxford/Talawanda)**. Graessle was among the OAC leaders in three-point shooting with a team-best 45 made three-pointers. Richardson, who started 20 games as a freshman, showed her all-around talent as she was second on the team in scoring and steals, while third in rebounds.

"It is a challenge that we will need to work very hard to meet," commented 22-year Capital Head Coach Dixie Jeffers. "It will be difficult to complete because of the competition night-after-night in this league."

Below is a complete summary of how all 10 OAC schools fared in the preseason Conference coaches' polls.

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| Women's Coaches' Poll | | | Men's Coaches' Poll | | |
|-----------------------|----------------------------|--------|---------------------|----------------------------|--------|
| Rank | School (First Place Votes) | Points | Rank | School (First Place Votes) | Points |
| 1. | Capital (5) | 77 | 1. | Capital (8) | 80 |
| 2. | Baldwin-Wallace (4) | 71 | 2. | Heidelberg (1) | 61 |
| 3. | Wilmington (1) | 65 | 3. | John Carroll (1) | 60 |
| 4. | Otterbein | 56 | 4. | Ohio Northern | 53 |
| 5. | Ohio Northern | 55 | 5. | Baldwin-Wallace | 52 |
| 6. | Mount Union | 40 | 6. | Muskingum | 44 |
| 7. | Muskingum | 28 | 7. | Wilmington | 36 |
| 8. | Heidelberg | 27 | 8. | Otterbein | 34 |
| 9. | John Carroll | 22 | 9. | Mount Union | 21 |
| 10. | Marietta | 9 | 10. | Marietta | 9 |