

MOUNTAIN TIME ZONE RULES THE ROOST

Denver, Colorado College top 94X WCHA Preseason Media Poll; DU's Zucker Player of the Year

The Denver Pioneers, who finished second in the WCHA standings a year ago before falling to North Dakota in the NCAA Midwest Regional Final, earned the top spot in this year's 94X WCHA Preseason Media Poll. The survey of media members covering the league was released today.

Denver received 15 first-place votes to top the poll, ahead of long-time rival CC, which received seven first-place votes. Third-place North Dakota and No. 4 choice Nebraska-Omaha each received first-place votes. North Dakota won the league's regular-season and tournament championships last season, and advanced to the NCAA Frozen Four.

First-place votes in the poll were worth 12 points, second place 11, and so on. The teams were placed in order based on the voting average.

Defending national champion Minnesota Duluth placed fifth, followed by Minnesota. The top six teams in this year's preseason poll all earned home ice advantage in last year's WCHA playoffs. St. Cloud State finished seventh, followed by Wisconsin, Alaska-Anchorage, Bemidji State, Minnesota State, and Michigan Tech.

In addition to predicting the league's order of finish, the Preseason Media Poll also included votes on the WCHA Player of the Year, Rookie of the Year, and Coach of the Year. The media selected Denver sophomore forward Jason Zucker as the WCHA Preseason Player of the Year. North Dakota's Rocco Grimaldi was chosen WCHA Preseason Rookie of the Year. The Preseason Coach of the Year is Colorado College's Scott Owens.

For the first time, media members also selected a Preseason All-WCHA Team.

94X WCHA PRESEASON MEDIA POLL

PREDICTED ORDER OF FINISH

1. Denver (16 first-place votes) ... 11.35 poll average
2. Colorado College (7) ... 10.54
3. North Dakota (2) ... 10.31
4. Nebraska-Omaha (1) ... 8.31
5. Minnesota Duluth ... 8.12
6. Minnesota ... 7.73
7. Wisconsin ... 5.54
- (tie) St. Cloud State ... 5.54
9. Alaska-Anchorage ... 3.85
10. Bemidji State ... 2.92
11. Minnesota State ... 2.12
12. Michigan Tech ... 1.69

PRESEASON PLAYER OF THE YEAR

Jason Zucker, forward, Denver (10 votes); Jaden Schwartz, forward, Colorado College (8)

Others receiving votes: Jack Connolly, forward, Minnesota Duluth; Justin Schultz, defenseman, Wisconsin; Drew Shore, forward, Denver.

PRESEASON ROOKIE OF THE YEAR

Rocco Grimaldi, forward, North Dakota (17 votes)

Others receiving votes: Seth Ambroz, forward, Minnesota; Scott Mayfield, defenseman, Denver; Sam Mellor, forward, Alaska-Anchorage; Kyle Rau, forward, Minnesota

PRESEASON COACH OF THE YEAR

Scott Owens, Colorado College (9 votes); Mel Pearson, Michigan Tech (5)

Others receiving votes: Dean Blais, Nebraska-Omaha; George Gwozdecky, Denver; Don Lucia, Minnesota; Dave Shiyak, Alaska-Anchorage

PRESEASON ALL-WCHA TEAM

Forwards

Jack Connolly, Minnesota Duluth; Jaden Schwartz, Colorado College (unanimous selection); Jason Zucker, Denver

Others receiving votes: J.T. Brown, Minnesota Duluth; Rocco Grimaldi, North Dakota; Corban Knight, North Dakota; Danny Kristo, North Dakota; Drew Shore, Denver

Defensemen

Ben Blood, North Dakota; Justin Schultz, Wisconsin (unanimous selection)

Others receiving votes: Gabe Guentzel, Colorado College; Brad Hunt, Bemidji State; Nick Jensen, St. Cloud State; Brady Lamb, Minnesota Duluth; David Makowski, Denver

Goalie

Aaron Dell, North Dakota

Others receiving votes: John Faulkner, Nebraska-Omaha, Kent Patterson, Minnesota

The following media members took part in the 94X Preseason Media Poll.

David Ahlers, KKAR Radio/University of Nebraska-Omaha; Stephen Anderson, Daily Mining Gazette; Roman Augustoviz, Minneapolis Star Tribune; Andy Baggot, Wisconsin State Journal; Mike Chambers, Denver Post; Bruce Ciskie, KZIO Radio/Bulldog Radio Network; Chris Dilks, Western College Hockey; Shane Frederick, Mankato Free Press; John Gilbert, WCHA.com; Kurt Haider, KENI Radio; Mick Hatten, St. Cloud Times; Dirk Hembroff, WKMJ Radio; Tim Hennessy, KQHT Radio; Ken Landau, 103.9 FM The Eagle Radio; Todd Milewski, USCHO.com; Dan Myers, College Hockey News; Jess Myers, Inside College Hockey; Joe Paisley, Colorado Springs Gazette; Kevin Pates, Duluth News Tribune; Brian Posick, WIBA Radio/Badger Radio Network; Chad Purcell, Omaha World Herald; Brad Schlossman, Grand Forks Herald; Wally Shaver, KSTP Radio/Gopher Radio Network; Jay Stickney, 87.7 The Ticket Radio; Eric Stromgren, Bemidji Pioneer; Mike Sullivan, KTOE Radio

(Note: Not all voting media members chose to participate in voting for the all-league team or individual honors. All 25 voters did submit a predicted order of finish.)

94X is the broadcast home of UMD Bulldog men's hockey. The full 37-game schedule, plus playoffs, can be heard on KZIO-FM, which is 94.1 in the Twin Ports, and 104.3 FM in the surrounding area. All games will also be broadcast on KBAJ 105.5 in the Grand Rapids area, and KAOD 106.7 FM in Babbitt, and on the internet at www.94xrocks.com.

Red Rock Radio operates seven radio stations in Northern Minnesota including KQDS-FM, KQDS-AM, KZIO, WWAX (92.1 FM in Duluth), KBAJ (105.5 FM Grand Rapids), WXXZ (95.3 FM in Grand Marais), and KAOD (106.7 FM in Babbitt).