

## Heartland Collegiate Athletic Conference Office

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## Pre-Season Baseball Coaches Poll

### Manchester Selected as Pre-Season HCAC Baseball Favorite

**GREENWOOD, IN** – The Manchester College baseball team has been selected as the favorite to claim the 2007 Heartland Collegiate Athletic Conference baseball championship. The Spartans received 78 total points in the annual HCAC Preseason Coaches Poll.

The poll collects votes from all nine head coaches in the HCAC. Manchester received eight first place votes in the poll. The College of Mt. St. Joseph collected the second most votes in the poll and finished with 68 total points and the remaining first place vote. Rose-Hulman finished third in the poll with 60 points and was followed by Franklin College which claimed 56 points. Transylvania University (46 points), Anderson University (36), Bluffton University (26), Hanover College (24), and Defiance College (11) rounded out the poll.

Manchester will be looking for its second straight conference title in 2007. MC is ranked No. 30 in the *Collegiate Baseball Newspaper Preseason Poll* and will look for the schools fourth straight NCAA regional appearance. The Spartans claimed the 2006 regular season championship with a 19-2 conference mark. Manchester was 35-11 overall and fell to Mt. St. Joseph in the HCAC Tournament final. The Spartans return a host of key components from last season's team including reigning conference MVP Zac Bireley (Columbia City, IN/H.S.). The senior first basemen hit .371 last season with nine home runs, 20 doubles, 50 RBI, and 53 runs.

Also returning to set the table for the heart of the Spartans' order is senior outfielder Scott Tarnowski (Roanoke, IN/Huntington North). The senior hit .312 a year ago with 44 runs scored, 42 RBI, and seven home runs.

On the mound, Manchester will be led by All- HCAC first team selection Tyler Wolfe (Hamilton, IN/H.S.). The senior was 6-4 on the hill last year with a 3.63 earned run average. Wolfe had 58 strikeouts in 86.2 innings pitched. Senior Marcus Miller (Rochester, IN/H.S.) also returns to the mound after collecting a 9-1 mark last season. He posted a 3.36 earned run average and struck out 32 in 69.2 innings.

Mt. St. Joseph will be looking for the schools third HCAC baseball title and first since the 2003 season. The Lions claimed the HCAC tournament title last spring, handing Manchester a 2-1 defeat in the final. Leading the way this season will be three All-HCAC selections.

Included among the impact players are outfielders Michael Mayer (Sr., Fairfield, OH/Hamilton Badin) and Neil Gamble (Sr., Loveland, OH/Milford). Mayer led the Lions with a .355 batting average and added 14 doubles, seven home runs, and 58 RBI. Gamble hit .310 last season with 42 runs and 25 RBI. Senior catcher Nick Katsetos (North Bend, OH/Taylor) finished .309 at the plate and added 13 doubles and 25 RBI.

The Mount was 30-17 last season with a 10-11 mark in the HCAC standings.

Rose-Hulman is predicted to mount a strong push for the conference title in its first year as an HCAC member. The Engineers finished with a 25-15 mark last season as a member of the Southern Collegiate Athletic Conference.



Rose will have key members returning from last year's team. Junior pitcher Michael Matsui (Plainfield, IL/South) was 5-2 on the mound last season with a 2.39 earned run average, striking out 36 in 64.0 innings pitched. Senior right fielder Matt Salisbury (Ft. Wayne, IN/Homestead) and senior first baseman Tim Braun (Chicago, IL/Brother Rice) will be looked to for an offensive punch. Salisbury hit .350 last season with 11 doubles and 37 RBI, while Braun led the team in batting average (.372), home runs (11), and RBI (40).

The 2007 baseball season opens on February 24. The HCAC portion of the schedule will begin on March 19 with the HCAC Tournament slated for May 10-12.

### **2007 HCAC Baseball Coaches Preseason Poll**

<u>Team</u>	<u>Points (first place votes)</u>
1. Manchester	78 (8)
2. Mt. St. Joseph	68 (1)
3. Rose-Hulman	60
4. Franklin	56
5. Transylvania	46
6. Anderson	36
7. Bluffton	26
8. Hanover	24
9. Defiance	11

### **2007 Baseball Players to Watch**

**Anderson:** Stephen Jones – OF (Jr., Anderson, Ind./Anderson), Zach Sounhein – OF (Sr., Crystal Lake, IL), Pete Whiting – SS (Jr., Clarkston, MI)

**Bluffton:** Tony Moore – OF/2B (Jr., Elida, OH/H.S.), Tim Kay – RHP/DH (Jr., Alpharetta, GA/Blessed Trinity), Gregg Sigg – 1B (Jr., Toledo, OH/Maumee)

**Defiance:** Jeremy Hawkins – SS (Sr., Lexington, OH), Lenny Koesters – OF (Sr., St. Henry, OH), Phil Kosier – 1B (Sr., Bradford, OH)

**Franklin:** Andy Clark – P (Sr., Louisville, Ky./Seneca), Jim Swienconek – 1B (So., Griffith, IN), Dustin Eck – LHP (Sr., New Palestine, IN), David Federoff – SS (Sr., Portage, IN)

**Hanover:** Joe Cravens – P (Jr., Hodgenville, Ky./Larue Co.), Dan Gillin – OF/P (Sr., Indianapolis, Ind./Roncalli), Kyle Barnett – P (So., Sellersburg, IN/Silver Creek)

**Manchester:** Zac Bireley – 1B (Sr., Columbia City, Ind./Columbia City), Matt Talarico – IF (Sr., Ft. Wayne, IN/Bishop Dwenger), Scott Tarnowski – OF (Sr., Huntington, Ind./North), Tyler Wolfe – P (Sr., Hamilton, Ind./Hamilton), Marcus Miller – P (Sr., Rochester, IN/H.S.)

**Mount St. Joseph:** Seth DeBra – 1B (Jr., Loveland, Ohio/Milford), Zach Grove – P (So., Wilmington, Ohio/Wilmington), Michael Mayer – RF (Sr., Fairfield, Ohio/Badin), Neil Gamble – CF (Sr., Loveland, OH/Milford), Nick Katsetos – C (Sr., North Bend, OH/Taylor)

**Rose-Hulman:** Matt Salisbury – RF/P (Sr., Ft. Wayne, IN/Homestead), Tim Braun – DH/1B (Sr., Chicago, IL/Brother Rice), Brad Otto – P (Sr., Bath, IN/Union County), Michael Matsui – P/2B (Jr., Plainfield, IL/South)

**Transylvania:** Mitch Kuczek – OF (Jr., Cincinnati, Ohio/Moeller), Dillon Lawson – IF (Sr., Louisville, KY/Trinity), Bryan Vasse – 3B (Sr., Louisville, Ky./Trinity)

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\*\*\*For more information on the Heartland Collegiate Athletic Conference and up to date standings, schedules, statistics, and more, log on to the HCAC website at [www.heartlandconf.org](http://www.heartlandconf.org).

