

NJCAA Service Bureau
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Two-Time Champ Mott Bears Early Favorites in Men's DII Basketball

COLORADO SPRINGS, Colo. (Oct. 22, 2008) -- You can't really blame the pollsters for going the easy route when it comes to the pre-season rankings for NJCAA Division II men's basketball. After all, the last two seasons have been completely dominated by one team: **Mott Community College** (Mich.). The defending two-time national champion Bears begin their 2008-09 campaign with the No. 1 ranking in the pre-season poll. Mott is followed by **MCC - Penn Valley** (Mo.), last year's runner-up **Columbus State Community College** (Ohio), **Cecil College** (Md.) and **Ellsworth Community College** (Iowa).

Head coach Steve Schmidt has built **Mott Community College** into one of the best overall programs in the country, regardless of division. Under Schmidt, the Bears have won three national titles (2003, 07 and 08) and are the only DII program to play in five national titles (2001, 04, 05, 07 and 08). In 17 seasons, Schmidt's overall record with the Bears is 449-110 (.803), which is the most career wins in school history and ranks 20th on the NJCAA Men's Basketball Active Coaching Record list. Mott has posted an incredible record of 223-38 (.854) in Michigan Community College Athletic Association Western Division play under his direction and 13 consecutive seasons with 25 or more wins. The 2008-09 Mott Bears return two starters and four players overall from last year's 35-2 title team. Among the players returning is First-Team Pre-Season All-American *DeAndre Nealy* (6'6", 225 lbs.) who was the MVP of last year's DII national tournament. *Nealy* averaged 12.4 points and 6.1 rebounds a game and also blocked 5.1 shots a game. *Jacquez Williams* (6'1", 172 lbs.) could be one of the best perimeter players in Region 12 this season after contributing 6.1 points a game last year for the Bears, while transfers *Bobby Lewis* (6'2", 195 lbs.) and *Damon Franklin* (6'4", 190 lbs.) gives Mott the size and depth to compete for another national title. The Bears tip off their season on Nov. 7 when they host Jackson Community College (Mich.).

Penn Valley had an impressive season in 2007-08, going 28-8 and winning the Region 16 title and earning a berth in the DII national tournament for the first time in school history with a 76-67 victory over Johnson County Community College (Kan.) in the District 10 title game. The Scouts then went 2-2 in Danville, Ill., and placed sixth. This season head coach Marcus Harvey (16 years, 354-108) looks to repeat that success with three returning starters, including 2008 First-Team All-American and 2008-09 First-Team Pre-Season All-American *Pierre De Clue* (5'10", 155 lbs.). Arguably one of the best basketball names ever to be pronounced at a national tournament, *De Clue* is also arguably one of the best players in all of NJCAA basketball. His overall game posted averages of 14.7 points, 2.9 rebounds, 4.0 assists and 2.5 steals per contest. The Scouts also return *Jack Brown* (6'1", 160 lbs.) who earned All-Region 16 honors last season for his 12.3 points, 2.7 rebounds, 2.8 assist, 1.9 steals per game. Harvey is also looking for big contributions from *Logan Sullivan* (6'7", 210 lbs.) who sat out last year, but posted 7.5 points and 2.3 rebounds a game for the 2006-07 season. The Scouts begin their season on Nov. 1 when they travel to North Arkansas College.

Also making their first-ever appearance at the DII national tournament last year was **Columbus State**. The Cougars fell in the DII title game to Mott 83-73. The Cougars were 29-7 last season and won the Region 12A Championship, which is probably one of the toughest regions in NJCAA DII basketball. Head coach Pat Carlisle (2 years, 44-22) will have plenty of talent to repeat their 07-08 run as three starters and four total players return from the runner-up team. Pre-Season Second-Team All-American *Greg Rice* (6'4", 190 lbs.) will

be the Cougars' one of the main offensive threats this year after coming off the bench last season. *Rice* poured in close to 10 points and five rebounds a contest last year and earned All-Tournament honors last season in Danville. The three returning starters include *Jerrell Sanders* (6'6", 210 lbs.), *Greg LeSage* (6'9", 200 lbs.) and *Marcus Britt* (6', 190 lbs.). *Sanders* contributed 9.3 points and 5.3 rebounds in 07-08, while *LeSage* averaged 10.0 points and 8.2 rebounds a contest. *Britt* earned All-Tournament honors for his play in Danville while averaging 10.8 points and 2.4 assists per game in the regular season. Freshmen *Rayshwen Goins* (6'5", 240 lbs.) and *Rod Hurst* (6'2", 170 lbs.) will see plenty of action for Carisle's Cougars.

After going undefeated during the regular season, top-ranked **Cecil** fell 98-95 in the Region 20 title game in overtime to Prince George's Community College (Md.). That disappointment is still fresh in the minds of head coach William Lewit (13 years, 323-87) and his three returning players from last season. Cecil, who ranked second in the nation averaging 100.9 points a game, will again be a high-scoring offense with the return of Pre-Season Third-Team All-American *Antonio Haymon* (6'6", 220) who posted roughly 15 points and eight rebounds a game. *A.J. Spencer* (6'2", 200 lbs.) also returns for the Seahawks after contributing 6.0 points, 3.7 rebounds and 4.3 assists per contest. *Lewit* is very excited about newcomers *Omar Strong* (5'8", 160 lbs.) and *Brandon Greene* (6'5", 220 lbs.) who were both All-Conference performers in their senior seasons in Baltimore, Md. The Seahawks will begin their quest to get back to the DII national tournament for the fifth time in seven years on Nov. 19 when they travel to Delaware Tech & Community College (Stanton-Wilmington).

Ellsworth believes this is the season they will break through and make their first appearance at the DII tournament in school history. If you are head coach Troy Mulenburg (9 years, 142-134) you have to like your chances. Mulenburg returns six players off of last season's 21-10 club that was runner-up in Region 11 to Kirkwood Community College (Iowa). Top returnees for the Panthers include 2008 Third-Team All-American and 2008 Pre-Season First-Team All-American *Tony Lewis* (6'6", 235 lbs.) and Pre-Season Third-Team All-American *Mike Calelaria* (6', 180 lbs.). *Lewis* averaged a double-double last season with 17.0 points and 12.2 rebounds a game, while shooting 48 percent from the floor. *Calelaria* was the team's best three-point shooter, posting a 43.5 percentage from behind the three-point line while posting 13.1 points and 5.0 assists per contest. Mulenburg expects big contributions from *L.C. Doss* (6'2", 185 lbs.), who sat out last year due to injury, and *Nick Wagner* (6'6", 200 lbs.). Incoming freshman *John Wolfe* (6'10", 270 lbs.), who was all All-Conference performer in Texas, and *Richie Walker* (6'3", 185 lbs.), who was All-Area in Chicago, Ill., will also see plenty of action this year for the Panthers. Ellsworth is set to tip off their season on Nov. 3 against William Penn University's JV team.

Over 120 Division II programs will be playing for a coveted spot at the NJCAA Men's Division II National Championship Tournament, which will be hosted again by Danville Area Community College in Danville, Ill., March 18-21, 2009.

Place	College	Location	Record	Points	1st PI Votes	Last Week
1	Mott Community College	Flint, MI	35-2	0	0	0
2	MCC-Penn Valley	Kansas City, MO	28-8	0	0	0
3	Columbus State Community College	Columbus, OH	29-7	0	0	0
4	Cecil College	North East, MD	31-1	0	0	0
5	Ellsworth Community College	Iowa Falls, IA	21-10	0	0	0
6	Monroe Community College	Rochester, NY	24-8	0	0	0
7	Illinois Central College	East Peoria, IL	23-7	0	0	0
8	Louisburg College	Louisburg, NC	24-7	0	0	0
9	Lansing Community College	Lansing, MI	25-5	0	0	0
10	Kirkwood Community College	Cedar Rapids, IA	32-4	0	0	0
11	Triton College	River Grove, IL	23-9	0	0	0
11	Sinclair Community College	Dayton, OH	24-6	0	0	0
13	Johnson County Community College	Overland Park, KS	21-12	0	0	0
14	Community College of Beaver County	Monaca, PA	22-10	0	0	0
15	Danville Area Community College	Danville, IL	24-12	0	0	0
16	Phoenix College	Phoenix, AZ	16-17	0	0	0
17	Central Community College-Columbus Campus	Columbus, NE	15-16	0	0	0
18	Erie Community College	Buffalo, NY	27-8	0	0	0
19	South Suburban College	South Holland, IL	31-5	0	0	0
20	Waubensee Community College	Sugar Grove, IL	15-17	0	0	0
21	Des Moines Area Community College	Boone, IA	24-6	0	0	0
22	Grand Rapids Community College	Grand Rapids, MI	20-9	0	0	0
22	Owens Community College	Toledo, OH	20-9	0	0	0
24	McHenry County College	Crystal Lake, IL	23-10	0	0	0
25	Delaware Technical & CC/Stanton-Wilmington	Newark, DE	18-15	0	0	0