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MEN'S BASKETBALL PRESEASON POLLS RELEASED

OGDEN, Utah (Oct. 22, 2008) - Ken Bone's Portland State Vikings have been selected by the coaches and the media to capture the 2008-09 Big Sky Conference Men's Basketball preseason polls.

The polls were released on Wednesday by the league. Coaches were not allowed to vote for their own teams.

Portland State, which finished 23-10 in 2007-08, earned seven first-place votes from the coaches and 63 total points. The Vikings earned 23 of 26 first-place votes from the media and 230 total points. This marks the first time in school history the Vikings have been selected to win the conference championship. Portland State joined the Big Sky in 1996-97, the season it brought back men's basketball after dropping the program in 1981.

Portland State won the regular-season title in 2007-08, finishing 14-2 in conference. The Vikings won their first ever post-season championship, downing Northern Arizona 67-51 in the championship game. Portland State's season came to an end with a loss to eventual national champion Kansas in the first round of the NCAA Tournament.

The Vikings return Big Sky MVP Jeremiah Dominguez, a senior guard from Salem, Ore. Dominguez averaged 14.2 points and four assists per game as a junior. The Vikings are expected to be bolstered by Phil Nelson (Washington), Dominic Waters (Hawai'i) and Jamie Jones (Portland), who all sat out last season after transferring from Division I institutions.

The University of Montana was selected second in both polls. The Grizzlies earned two first-place votes from the coaches and 56 total points. Montana also earned two first-place votes from the media and 180 total points. Wayne Tinkle's Grizzlies finished the 2007-08 season 14-16, losing in the quarterfinals of the Big Sky Championship. The Grizzlies will be led by senior forward Jordan Hasquet, and junior guard Ryan Staudacher. Montana will also benefit from the addition of Division I transfers Jack McGillis (Oregon State) and Michael Taylor (Eastern Washington).

Joe O'Brien's Idaho State Bengals were selected third in both polls. The Bengals received one first-place vote from the media, and 169 total points. In the coaches' poll, the Bengals earned 49 total points. Idaho State returns four starters from a team that finished 8-8 in conference play last season, including senior guard Matt Stucki and junior guard Amorrow Morgan. The Bengals returned seven of the top eight scorers from last year's squad.

Northern Arizona, which has advanced to the Big Sky Championship game three consecutive years, was picked fourth by the coaches and fifth by the media. Weber State, which claimed the 2006-07 championship, was tabbed fourth by the media and fifth by the coaches. Northern Arizona will be led by senior guard Josh Wilson, who ranks fifth on the Big Sky's career assists list with 551. Weber State will be led by senior forward Daviin Davis and senior guard Kellen McCoy.

Northern Colorado, entering its third year of league play, was picked sixth in both polls. Tad Boyle's Bears return four starters and nine lettermen from the 2007-08 team, which won 13 overall games. Leading the way is senior forward Jabril Banks, who averaged 13.2 points and 5.8 rebounds per game as a junior.

Rounding out the polls were Eastern Washington, Montana State and Sacramento State. EWU was picked seventh by the coaches and eighth by the media. Montana State was picked seventh by the media and eighth by the coaches. Sacramento State, which enters the season with new coach Brian Katz, was selected ninth in both polls.

Weber State will be the first team to play this season, opening against Miami, Ohio, on Wednesday, Nov. 12 in the Coaches vs. Cancer Classic in Westwood, Calif. Six other Big Sky teams open play on Friday, Nov. 14.

The Big Sky Championship begins with quarterfinal games on Saturday, March 7. The semifinals and championship will be played on Tuesday, March 10, and Wednesday, March 11 at the home of the regular-season champion.

The semifinal games will be televised on Altitude Sports & Entertainment. The championship game will be shown live on ESPN2.

COACHES' POLL		MEDIA POLL	
Team, (First-place votes)	Total Points	School (First-place votes)	Total Points
1. Portland State (7)	63	1. Portland State (23)	230
2. Montana (2)	56	2. Montana (2)	180
3. Idaho State	49	3. Idaho State (1)	169
4. Northern Arizona	41	4. Weber State	165
5. Weber State	34	5. Northern Arizona	153
6. Northern Colorado	29	6. Northern Colorado	104
7. Eastern Washington	22	7. Montana State	76
8. Montana State	14	8. Eastern Washington	64
9. Sacramento State	10	9. Sacramento State	38