

**Ping 2009 Division II
Pre-Season Baseball Poll**

Rank	Final 2008	Comment
1	9	DELTA STATE STATESMAN After being denied an opportunity to advance to the DII Championships after being upended by OBU in the South Central Region Tournament final, Head Coach Mike Kinnison and the Statesmen should be ready for not just another Gulf South Conference title, but challenge for the national championship. <i>more...</i>
2	1	MOUNT OLIVE TROJANS The Trojans rise to the top apexed last season as MOC convincingly won the title and earned the schools first-ever national championship in any sport. It will be difficult for the Trojans to “mount” a repeat as almost “olive” their starting pitchers from last season are no longer on campus. <i>more...</i>
3	4	TAMPA SPARTANS The Spartans return just four starters, but Coach Sam Militello and his staff are confident this years club will be just as good - if not better - than last years team which, yawn... yet again made it to the NCAA Division II Baseball National Finals. <i>more...</i>
4	5	CENTRAL MISSOURI STATE MULES CMSU won 47 games and the Central Regional title on the way to Sauget under first-year head coach Tom Myers. The Mules have finished in the top five seven of the last nine years and if they are to make it once again it will be due to a pitching staff chock-full of talent. <i>more...</i>
5	2	OUACHITA BAPTIST TIGERS Last year the Tigers recorded the most wins in school history and finished as the NCAA Division II Championship runner ups. A trio of seniors will lead the Tigers offensive onslaught which slugged .506 as a team and stole nearly 100 bases more than opposition last year. <i>more...</i>
6	13	USC AIKEN PACERS The Pacers nearly made it to the finals as they lost to MOC in the South Atlantic Championship game. The returning roster offensively is stocked like Oprah’s fridge; however the pitching staff is more akin to a 90201 debutante’s icebox with minimal starting experience. <i>more...</i>
7	17	EMPORIA STATE HORNETS ESU made a regional appearance for the fifth straight year and at one time was ranked number two in the nation when the Hornets were riding a thirty-five game winning streak. The Hornets will have a tough time eclipsing those numbers, but it is in the realm of possibility. <i>more...</i>
8	10	SOUTHERN ARKANSAS MULERIDERS Fourth year coach Allen Gum and his Muleriders are one of the reasons the Gulf South Conference is the predominant conference in the country. Hayden Simpson was an All GSC pitcher who would have won even if the Muleriders weren’t more the doubling the scores of opposition. more...
9	22	WEST ALABAMA TIGERS The Tigers ended last year’s season tying the school record for wins, but fell short in their goal of advancing to the Division II Baseball Championships. West Alabama has a phenomenal chance of improving on their record with senior third baseman Rob Dahlberg leading the offense. <i>more...</i>
10	11	CHICO STATE WILDCATS The Wildcats have a top shelf one-two starting pitcher punch in Pete Mickartz and Mike Robbins worthy of a monster truck announcer to exclaim how “AWESOME! AWESOME!! AWESOME!!!” they are. <i>more...</i>
11	8	FRANKLIN PIERCE RAVENS Franklin Pierce captured its third-straight Northeast Regional Championship in route to the DII Championships, but went 0-2 in the final tournament. The Ravens will be looking to get it done once again as FPU returns six starting position players as well as all three regular members of the starting rotation. <i>more...</i>

12	16	<p>UC SAN DIEGO TRITONS</p> <p>The Tritons have a pair of offensive players and a duo of pitchers that could have UCSD brewing a perfect storm in 2009. The biggest plus for the Tritons may be their defense as last season the soft handed Tritons led the nation in fielding percentage at .975. <i>more...</i></p>
13	18	<p>ABILENE CHRISTIAN WILDCATS</p> <p>The Wildcats will need to address some question marks in the field, but Coach Britt Bonneau should compile his eleventh 40-win season in thirteen years at the helm. ACU is hoping a number of transfers will have an immediate effect in augmenting the depleted pitching staff. <i>more...</i></p>
14	14	<p>TUSCULUM PIONEERS</p> <p>The Pioneers will be looking to win their fourth SAC Championship in five years and will have to rely on the pitching staff to get it done. Several batsmen including Maikol Gonzales who put up video game like numbers last season are no longer on campus. <i>more...</i></p>
15	15	<p>COLUMBUS STATE COUGARS</p> <p>The departure of ace pitcher Korey Noles is a huge loss, but the Cougars are fortunate to have senior Danny Davidson and others returning who logged major innings last year for a team that finished in the top ten nationally in ERA at 3.35. <i>more...</i></p>
16	12	<p>NEBRASKA OMAHA MAVERICKS</p> <p>Don't underestimate Coach Bob Herold's Mavericks who seem to find themselves playing with the cream of the crop at the end of every year. Evan Porter and Brian Strawn will make the Mavs a force at the plate while starters Chris Kessinger and Brandon Dahl will limit opposing offenses from the top of the mound. <i>more...</i></p>
17	NR	<p>ST. MARY'S (TX)</p> <p>The Rattlers ended strong last season, winning eight of their last nine games to accumulate 39 victories despite an inexperienced roster. This season St. Mary's return their top four starting pitchers and all but a pair of outfielders from the starting lineup. <i>more...</i></p>
18	3	<p>SONOMA STATE SEAWOLVES</p> <p>The Seawolves made their first appearance in the National Championships last season where the SSU played tough, but a pair of one run losses to OBU ended the best season in school history. David Adler and Matt Means will be impossible to replace, but with every year comes a new hero. <i>more...</i></p>
19	24	<p>WEST VIRGINIA STATE YELLOW JACKETS</p> <p>WVSU won their 16th WVIAC baseball championship, but were stymied in the North Atlantic Regional, scoring only three runs in two straight losses. The Yellow Jackets should overcome their postseason funk with plenty of returning power this season. <i>more...</i></p>
20	18	<p>GRAND VALLEY STATE LAKERS</p> <p>GVSU hitters generally won't knock the cover off the ball, but they will get on base early and often to score runs. On the mound big lefty Andre Benjamin and the Laker staff will be looking to make up for GVSU's early 2008 postseason exit. <i>more...</i></p>
21	19	<p>WEST CHESTER GOLDEN RAMS</p> <p>This season senior outfielder Matt Cotellese will once again lead the offense with help from slick fielding shortstop co-captain Nick Spisak. Two top starters will be back for the Golden Rams and backed up by closer extraordinaire Eric Carmichael. <i>more...</i></p>
22	6	<p>ASHLAND EAGLES</p> <p>As unexpected and delightful as being Rick Rolled, the Eagles finished strong, finishing second in the GLIAC and won the NCAA Division II North Central Regional to crash the party in Sauget. Ashland's top two hitters return in the dynamic duo of Ben Minard and Jacob Petkac to proves last season was no fluke. <i>more...</i></p>
23	30	<p>ERSKINE FLYING FLEET</p> <p>The Flying Fleet stumbled at the end, losing their last five games, but they did establish a new school record for wins and will be looking for more 2009 as they return eight starters on offense and 10 pitchers. <i>more...</i></p>

24	NR	NORTHERN KENTUCKY NORSE Northern Kentucky returns the bulk of a championship team that went 38-24 last season and won its fourth Great Lakes Valley Conference title in the seven years. <i>more...</i>
25	28	ST. JOSEPH'S COLLEGE PUMAS The Pumas will compete for the GLVC title once again with slugging catcher Mike Pericht leading the way. Three-quarters of the Puma pitching staff return which is good news as SJC hurlers placed 19th in the nation last season. <i>more...</i>
26	NR	WESTERN OREGON WOLVES WOU lost only five players to graduation which should keep them in position for yet another conference crown. The small ball club will need its pitchers to come though big and with hurlers like Mike Eisenhauer and Mike Cusick, that isn't asking too much. <i>more...</i>
27	NR	MESA STATE MAVERICKS The Mavericks finished 2008 with a 42-17 record and won their fourth straight RMAC title. Look for the Mesa State to make it five with two-time All American Mike Provencher and sure handed catcher Grant Vickers. <i>more...</i>
28	NR	CALDWELL COUGARS The Cougars team ERA of 3.11 last season was also the fifth lowest mark in the USA. Their top two starters, Stephen Pfeil and Robert Casal had Barry White low ERAs will be back for another year in Jersey. <i>more...</i>
29	NR	CAL STATE STANISLAUS WARRIORS Last season the Warriors appeared in their first regional tournament as a Division II program and set a school record with 37 wins. The Warriors will be looking for more and return three of four of their top hitters from last season. <i>more...</i>
30	7	SHIPPENSBURG RAIDERS Leading hitter Justin Garber won't be back, but practically the rest of Red Raider offense will. The pitching staff isn't quite as intact, but still has some valuable, experienced players. <i>more...</i>