

Conferences

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be the mainstays of the team, but they aren't a serious title threat.

4. SEC

The SEC is without a national contender in '88-'89 but is very balanced, so look for a good race for the conference title.

Florida is the nation's most over-rated team for the last three years, and this year is no exception. Dwayne Schintzius looks clueless sometimes, but Livingston Chatman is a player. Add Dwayne Davis on the boards and make them the favorites for the SEC title.

Tennessee and Georgia will be close behind the Gators and should get NCAA bids. The Vols have the conference's best returnee in Dyron Nix, and the Bulldogs are the conference's deepest team. Look for LSU to be NCAA-bound too, because the NCAA refuses to have a tourney without Dale Brown.

5. Pac-10

Finally, the Pac-10 is rebuilding. Not since the UCLA days have the kids from the coast really been competitive. This year, the Pac-10 will sport two very fine teams and some good tests for those teams who thought they were scheduling easy wins.

The Cardinal of Stanford is the consensus pre-season favorite here, but make Arizona the pick. The Wildcats have the NCAA's Player of the Year-to-be in Sean Elliot, and look out for Anthony Cook. But Stanford has all five starters back, and Todd Lichti is the best player no one has heard of.

UCLA, Oregon State and California each have a shot at an NCAA bid this year. UCLA has a new coach with some good ideas in Jim Harrick, and he couldn't ask for a better point guard than Pooh Richardson. Ralph Miller is in his last year as the Beavers'

coach, and with four starters back, it could be a sweet farewell.

6. Big Eight

The Big Eight placed three teams in the Final Four last year, and the Oklahoma-Kansas game was terrific. But now it's back to reality for those cowpokes. Danny Manning, Derrick Chievous, Harvey Grant, Jeff Gray and Mitch Richmond are all NBA-bound, so the cupboard isn't so stocked, but it isn't bare either.

Oklahoma is a legitimate title threat with Stacey King and Mookie Blaylock. King is simply awesome, and Blaylock fits Billy Tubbs' system like a glove. They'll be tough to stop. Missouri will give the Sooners a run for their money. Doug Smith and Byron Irvin are ready to explode, but the Tigers haven't won an NCAA game in a looong time.

Kansas State and Oklahoma State are solid teams with NIT berths nearly locked already and are looking for a ticket to the big dance. Kansas is on mega-probation.

7. WAC

For years they've cried for lack of respect; now it's their time. The WAC has three NCAA likelies and three more NIT hopefuls — that's six of nine teams playoff bound.

New Mexico is the strongest of the teams in the WAC and a legitimate Top 20 team. They have forward Charlie Thomas and three players over 6-foot-10. Plus, the Lobos play in the Pit. Even the Lakers would have trouble beating New Mexico there.

UTEP and Utah will be strong this year. UTEP has a terrific coach in Don Haskins and a UCLA transfer, 7-foot center Greg Foster. Utah has forward Mitch Smith and four returning starters. The NCAA will look at both teams. BYU still has WAC '87-'88 Player of the Year

Michael Smith back for another year, but there is little support after him. Look for them in the NIT.

8. Metro

Is there a more mysterious conference? The Metro is up and down faster than an elevator, but one thing is always consistent — no one ever knows if Memphis State is on probation or not.

Well, Memphis State isn't on probation this year, but it won't matter because Louisville is the class of the Metro. The Cardinals have Pervis Ellison, still. Last year, he got rid of those braces and emerged as the talent everyone expected he'd be. If Louisville gets some consistent point guard play, they are ready for another championship.

Florida State is NCAA-bound and is tough with all five starters back. If Pat Kennedy can do a little magic, they may be Metro champs. And those Tigers of Memphis State can finally participate in post-season play, and they will somewhere, behind the leadership of tiny Elliot Perry.

9. Atlantic 10

Temple was in the top slot longer than anyone last year, and because of that they are receiving Top 20 votes this year. Actually, that's not the whole reason. There is this sophomore, Mark Macon, who can score tons of points but also shoots more than Rambo with a full clip. The difference this year is that point guard Howard Evans and the Owls' windx man, Tim Perry, are gone. Rebounding is the question, but with the easy conference schedule, they're NCAA-bound.

With Temple weak inside, the Mountaineers of West Virginia should bang their way to the conference title and a little ways in the NAAs. They have the roughest, toughest forwards in college ball in

Darryl Prue and Chris Brooks. However, at the foul line, they look like a combination of Greg Kite and Dennis Rodman. Still, with four starters back and unbeatable at home, WVU is looking up.

The Cinderella Rhode Island Rams lost their backcourt of "Silk" Owens and Tom Garrick to graduation and their coach to UCLA, but they do have Kenny Green, and he is enough for tournament play somewhere.

Best of the Rest

10. Independents — Notre Dame and DePaul are still on top.

11. Sun Belt — UNCC and Byron Dinkins are going to the NAAs again.

12. Missouri Valley — Wichita State will shock some people.

13. SWC — Houston has rebuilt Phi Slamma Jamma with Richard Hollis.

14. Big West (formerly PCAA) — When will UNLV get in a real conference?

15. Metro Atlantic — La Salle's Lionel Simmons is the second-best player no one knows.



Two Great Weekend Favorites

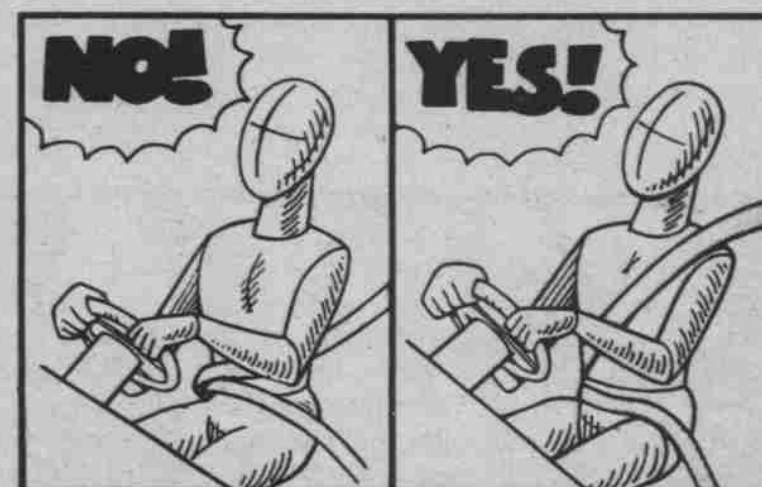
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Source: AAA Foundation for Traffic Safety Seat Belt Comic Book

Ferry tops All-ACC selections

From staff reports

Duke's Danny Ferry, the returning Atlantic Coast Conference player of the year, is the odds-on favorite to retain that honor during the upcoming 1988-89 season.

The 6-foot-10 Blue Devils senior forward from Bowie, Md., is the lone unanimous selection in the balloting by the media for the preseason team, being named on all 95 ballots at the 27th annual ACC Operation Basketball. Ferry, also selected as the 1987-88 ACC athlete of the year, was named on 81 ballots to repeat as the player of the year.

Ferry was the conference's leading scorer last year with a 19.1 average as he led Duke to a spot in the NCAA

Final Four before bowing to eventual national champion Kansas in the semifinals.

Senior Tom Hammonds of Georgia Tech finished second to Ferry in both preseason team balloting as well as the player of the year voting. Hammonds collected 88 votes in the team balloting and six for player of the year, while J.R. Reid of North Carolina placed third in both categories.

Reid, who was the leading vote-getter for both team and player honors prior to last season, had 87 team votes and five for player. Ferry, Reid, and Hammonds are the three returning members of last year's all-

conference team.

Juniors Sam Ivy of Wake Forest and Elden Campbell of Clemson are the other two members of the preseason team. Campbell was the No. 3 scorer a year ago as well as the leader in field goal percentage and blocked shots while Ivy was fifth in scoring. Reid was second in rebounding and sixth in scoring. Ivy also was a member of the all-conference second team.

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