



2024 Concordia Men's Basketball



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Concordia Athletic Communications

800 N. Columbia Ave. • Seward, NE 68434
 Website: concordiabulldogs.com
 Twitter: @cunebulldogs
 Facebook: facebook.com/concordiabulldogs
 Instagram: @cunebulldogs
 YouTube: youtube.com/concordiabulldogs

Jake Knabel, Director of Athletic Communications
 office: 402-643-7392
 email: jacob.knabel@cune.edu
 Twitter: @Jake_Knabel



2023-24 Schedule/Results

23-7 Overall, 15-5 GPAC (T-1st)

Date	Opponent	H/A	Score
Nov. 3	Mayville State (N.D.)	H	W, 88-73
Nov. 4	(19) William Penn (Iowa)	H	W, 103-74
Nov. 11	Benedictine (KS)	A	W, 74-61
Nov. 15	*(19) Morningside	H	L, 89-101
Nov. 18	*(18) Northwestern	A	L, 74-78
Nov. 29	*Midland	A	W, 104-86
Dec. 2	*Jamestown	H	W, 99-78
Dec. 6	*Mount Marty	A	W, 82-54
Dec. 9	*Briar Cliff	A	W, 86-82 (OT)
Dec. 17	San Francisco State (Calif.)	N	L, 73-74
Dec. 18	(19) Olivet Nazarene (Ill.)	N	W, 108-103 (2OT)
Dec. 30	St. Ambrose (Iowa)	A	W, 90-75
Jan. 3	*Jamestown	A	L, 79-89
Jan. 6	*Dakota Wesleyan	H	W, 92-71
Jan. 10	*Doane	H	W, 106-69
Jan. 17	*Hastings	A	L, 78-79
Jan. 20	*Briar Cliff	H	W, 87-82
Jan. 24	*Mount Marty	H	W, 92-63
Jan. 26	Concordia Ann Arbor	N	W, 80-75
Jan. 27	Concordia Wisconsin	A	W, 75-69
Jan. 31	*(19) Morningside	A	W, 99-88
Feb. 3	*(12) Northwestern	H	W, 84-81
Feb. 5	*Dordt	H	W, 89-84
Feb. 11	*Dakota Wesleyan	A	W, 95-79
Feb. 14	*Doane	A	W, 94-88
Feb. 17	*Dordt	A	L, 73-79
Feb. 21	*Hastings	H	W, 69-67 (OT)
Feb. 24	*Midland	H	W, 90-84 (OT)

GPAC Tournament

Feb. 28	Dordt	H	W, 87-83
March 2	Hastings	A	L, 78-82

*Conference game

Coaching Staff



Head Coach
Ben Limback

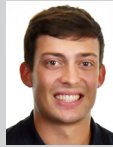


Assistant Coach
Ryan Tegtmeier



Grad Asst. Coach
Byron Dean

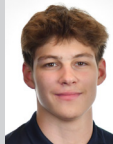
Concordia Starting Lineup



F • 12 • Noah Schutte
 6-4 • Sr. • Laurel, Neb.

PTS	REB	FG%	3-PT%
20.9	8.6	55.6	36.1

- 2x First Team All-GPAC
- Named Honorable Mention All-America in 2022-23; selected to 2022 NAIA National Championship All-Tournament Team.
- School all-time rankings of No. 5 in scoring (1,783) and No. 7 in rebounds (716).



G • 14 • Jaxon Stueve
 6-4 • Fr. • Papillion, Neb.

PTS	REB	FG%	3-PT%
6.4	1.8	47.7	39.1

- Started 29 of 30 games as a freshman.
- Season high of 15 points came in the double OT win over Olivet Nazarene.
- Has scored in double figures seven times in 2023-24.



F • 22 • Tristan Smith
 6-5 • Jr. • Elizabeth, Colo.

PTS	REB	BLK	FG%
18.2	9.4	1.46	60.5

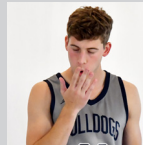
- 2023-24 First Team All-GPAC selection.
- Has totaled 870 points, 457 rebounds and 79 blocked shots in 77 collegiate games.
- 14 double-doubles this season.
- Older brother Gage was a teammate for two seasons and was the MVP of SlamBall.



G • 24 • Hayden Frank
 6-2 • Fr. • Malcolm, Neb.

PTS	REB	FG%	3-PT%
7.1	1.6	47.5	45.7

- Has played in all 30 games with one start as a freshman.
- Season high of 17 points has come in four separate games.
- Chosen by the Lincoln Journal Star as the 2023 area Prep Athlete of the Year.



G • 33 • Brad Bennett
 6-1 • Jr. • Elkhorn, Neb.

PTS	REB	FG%	3-PT%
10.9	2.9	48.4	39.8

- 2023-24 Second Team All-GPAC selection.
- Has totaled 650 points, 180 rebounds and 101 assists in 64 collegiate games.
- Racked up a career high 26 points in this season's win at DWJ.
- Made 8 3-pt FGs in a win last season.

Student Managers: Casey Stegeman, Bradyn Whittington and Malachi Limback

Quick Facts

Concordia University, Nebraska
 Location.....Seward
 Enrollment.....2,300
 Nickname.....Bulldogs
 School Colors.....Navy and White
 Home Arena.....Friedrich Arena
 Capacity.....2,000
 President.....Bernard Bull
 Director of Athletics.....Devin Smith
 Athletic Trainer.....Randy Baack
 Conference.....Great Plains Athletic Conf.
 Radio.....104.9 Max Country (KTMX-FM)

2023-24 Overall Record.....23-7
 2023-24 GPAC Record 15-5 (T-1st)
 NAIA Tournament Appearances 13
 NAIA Tournament Record 14-12
 NAIA Fab Fours.....2
2023-24 Statistical Leaders
 Points Noah Schutte (20.9)
 Rebounds..... Tristan Smith (9.4)
 Assists Noah Schutte (3.1)
 Steals Tristan Smith (1.3)
 Blocks..... Tristan Smith (1.5)



Pronunciation Guide

- 4 - Koo-liss
- 5 - Why-end
- 10 - KISS-en-JER
- 11 - MEW-ler
- 12 - SHUT
- 14 - Stoo-vee
- 34 - harr-EE
- 50 - TWO-brick

Concordia MBB NAIA All-Americans

- 2022: Carter Kent
 - 2017: Chandler Folkerts
 - 2007: Jon Ziegler
 - 2005: Jason Jisa
 - 2004: Rick Dietze
 - 1996: Darin Englebart
 - 1995: Darin Englebart
- *First, Second and Third Team Included



Limback Coaching Record

Concordia University, Nebraska (11 years)	
2013-14	8-21, 3-17 GPAC
2014-15	16-15, 9-11 GPAC
2015-16	18-12, 10-10 GPAC
2016-17	21-10, 10-8 GPAC
2017-18	17-13, 8-10 GPAC
2018-19	15-16, 7-13 GPAC
2019-20	24-9, 12-8 GPAC
2020-21	17-9, 14-6 GPAC
2021-22	28-7, 15-5 GPAC
2022-23	18-13, 11-9 GPAC
2023-24	23-7, 15-5 GPAC
TOTAL:	205-133 114-102 GPAC

- Also spent nine seasons as the head coach at Concordia University, Ann Arbor, where he won 115 games.
- Joined Grant Schmidt as the second head coach in program history to take the Bulldogs to the national tournament and lead them to a conference regular season title.
- Remains the program's all-time record holder for career steals with 229.

2023-24 Concordia Men's Basketball Roster

No.	Name	Pos.	Ht.	Yr.	Hometown/Previous School
2	Trey Scheef	G	6-1	Sr.	Wahoo, Neb./Wahoo HS
3	Joel Baker	G	6-0	Sr.	Alliance, Neb./Alliance HS
4	Zac Kulus	G	6-0	So.	Bennington, Neb./Concordia Omaha HS
5	Jaxon Weyand	G	5-11	So.	Crete, Neb./Milford HS
10	Brooks Kissinger	G	6-3	Fr.	Ashland, Neb./Ashland-Greenwood HS
11	Brayson Mueller	F	6-5	Jr.	Firth, Neb./Norris HS
12	Noah Schutte	F	6-4	Sr.	Laurel, Neb./Laurel-Concord-Coleridge HS
14	Jaxon Stueve	G/F	6-4	Fr.	Papillion, Neb./Bellevue West HS
20	Lukas Helms	F	6-6	Fr.	Lincoln, Neb./Lincoln Southwest HS
22	Tristan Smith	F	6-5	Jr.	Elizabeth, Colo./Elizabeth HS
24	Hayden Frank	G	6-2	Fr.	Malcolm, Neb./Malcolm HS
30	Brandt Van Dyke	F	6-8	Fr.	Lawton, Iowa/Sioux City East HS
33	Bradley Bennett	G	6-1	Jr.	Elkhorn, Neb./Mt. Michael Benedictine HS
34	Tyler Harre	G/F	6-5	Fr.	Scottsbluff, Neb./Scottsbluff HS / UNK
50	Tony Tubrick V	F	6-9	Jr.	Omaha, Neb./Creighton Prep HS

HEAD COACH BEN LIMBACK



Coaching Career

Concordia University, Nebraska | Head Coach
2013 - present

Concordia University, Ann Arbor | Head Coach
2003 - 2012

Southern Illinois University-Edwardsville | Assistant Coach
2000 - 2003

Concordia University, Nebraska | Assistant Coach
1999 - 2000

Playing Career

Played at Concordia University, Nebraska from 1995-99. As a senior during the 1998-99 season, he earned Nebraska-Iowa Athletic Conference Player of the Year honors and was named the Nebraska State College Player of the Year by the Omaha World-Herald. In addition, he twice received both NAIA honorable mention All-America (1998 and 1999) and NAIA Academic All-America (1998 and 1999) accolades. He was a member of Bulldog teams that advanced to the national tournament on three separate occasions.



2023-24 SEASON STATISTICS

CONCORDIA MEN'S BASKETBALL

WWW.CUNE.EDU/ATHLETICS

RECORD:	OVERALL	HOME	AWAY	NEUTRAL
ALL GAMES	23-7	12-1	9-5	2-1
CONFERENCE	15-5	9-1	6-4	0-0
NON-CONFERENCE	8-2	3-0	3-1	2-1

#	Player	gp-gs	min	avg	Total		3-Point		F-Throw		Rebounds				pf	dq	a	to	blk	stl	pts	avg
					fg-fga	pct	3fg-fga	pct	ft-fga	pct	off	def	tot	avg								
02	Trey Scheef	9-0	29	3.2	1-5	.200	1-5	.200	0-0	.000	0	1	1	0.1	2	0	1	1	0	0	3	0.3
03	Joel Baker	28-4	199	7.1	22-47	.468	16-36	.444	2-6	.333	1	17	18	0.6	17	0	6	12	1	5	62	2.2
04	Zac Kulus	29-1	306	10.6	34-89	.382	18-59	.305	9-13	.692	0	29	29	1.0	10	0	22	15	1	13	95	3.3
05	Jaxon Weyand	17-10	190	11.2	15-29	.517	5-16	.313	3-5	.600	4	13	17	1.0	25	0	20	15	0	3	38	2.2
10	Brooks Kissinger	30-0	429	14.3	50-119	.420	10-45	.222	42-55	.764	10	36	46	1.5	26	0	27	24	1	7	152	5.1
11	Brayson Mueller	27-2	185	6.9	23-43	.535	6-17	.353	13-18	.722	8	32	40	1.5	27	0	10	4	3	5	65	2.4
12	Noah Schutte	30-30	941	31.4	213-383	.556	35-97	.361	165-198	.833	45	213	258	8.6	51	1	92	67	1	32	626	20.9
14	Jaxon Stueve	28-15	575	20.5	62-130	.477	27-69	.391	27-37	.730	17	34	51	1.8	34	0	28	14	3	33	178	6.4
20	Lukas Helms	30-29	621	20.7	72-154	.468	11-43	.256	32-43	.744	25	78	103	3.4	73	1	45	57	8	27	187	6.2
22	Tristan Smith	28-28	810	28.9	193-319	.605	11-32	.344	113-175	.646	65	198	263	9.4	72	2	69	82	41	35	510	18.2
24	Hayden Frank	30-1	513	17.1	67-141	.475	42-92	.457	36-43	.837	6	42	48	1.6	33	0	27	30	1	16	212	7.1
30	Brandt Van Dyke	17-0	138	8.1	10-28	.357	6-19	.316	4-5	.800	4	24	28	1.6	7	0	6	9	2	2	30	1.8
33	Bradley Bennett	30-30	868	28.9	118-244	.484	64-161	.398	26-36	.722	12	76	88	2.9	64	0	52	36	6	26	326	10.9
34	Tyler Harre	29-0	256	8.8	36-83	.434	28-73	.384	9-10	.900	3	30	33	1.1	25	0	8	11	1	3	109	3.8
50	Tony Tubrick	11-0	65	5.9	8-11	.727	0-0	.000	8-11	.727	4	11	15	1.4	8	0	3	7	0	2	24	2.2
Total.....		30	6125		924-1825	.506	280-764	.366	489-655	.747	231	876	1107	36.9	474	4	416	392	69	209	2617	87.2
Opponents.....		30	6130		877-1945	.451	248-715	.347	349-495	.705	251	748	999	33.3	530	-	413	351	70	206	2351	78.4



2022-23 TEAM PUSHES NO. 2 SEED TO WIRE



Upset bid comes up one basket short in NAIA first round

It came down to one final possession in a game that was much more evenly-matched than the seeds would indicate. In the end, No. 2 seed Oklahoma Wesleyan University held off the 15th-seeded Concordia University Men's Basketball team, 72-70, in the first round of the 2023 NAIA National Championship tournament. The Eagles were able to breathe a sigh of relief when Jaxon Weyand's open look at a three rimmed out in the closing seconds of the contest that took place inside Hartman Arena in Park City, Kan., on March 7, 2023.

One of the very last at-large teams selected into the field of 64, Head Coach Ben Limback's squad endeavored to make a Cinderella run back to the final site in Kansas City. Instead, the campaign ended with an 18-13 overall mark.

"I'm proud of our effort," Limback said. "I can't say enough about this group and its ability to handle adversity. Throughout this game we weren't sharp – we turned it over 20 times. When you're a 15 seed going against a 2 seed and have a shot to win it, that's a pretty special group. It started with our toughness defensively. Brad (Bennett) started to get hot and Noah (Schutte) started to get hot. Everyone was feeding off it – Zac Kulus. Our leaders showed that toughness out there."





NAIA TOURNAMENT HISTORY

Appearances: 13 | Record: 14-12 | Fab Fours: 2

1991, 1992, 1995, 1996, 1997, 1998, 2001, 2003, 2005, 2020, 2022, 2023, 2024



2023

1ST RD: L, 72-70 vs. Oklahoma Wesleyan

2022

1ST RD: W, 96-78 vs. Indiana Northwest

2ND RD: W, 90-67 vs. Marian (Ind.)

RD of 16: W, 75-65 vs. Indiana Kokomo

QUARTERFINALS: L, 77-69 vs. Talladega (Ala.)

2020

1ST RD: L, 87-84 vs. Ottawa (Kan.)

2005

1ST RD: W, 74-69 vs. Trinity Christian (Ill.)

2ND RD: W, 70-63 vs. Flagler (Fla.)

QUARTERFINALS: W, 71-68 vs. Cornerstone (Mich.)

SEMIFINALS: W, 62-56 vs. Cedarville (Ohio)

CHAMPIONSHIP: L, 81-70 vs. Walsh (Ohio)

2003

1ST RD: W, 73-62 vs. Dominican (Calif.)

2ND RD: W, 68-54 vs. Cardinal Stritch (Wis.)

QUARTERFINALS: L, 77-72 (OT) vs. Bethany (Kan.)

2001

1ST RD: W, 88-70 vs. Cardinal Stritch (Wis.)

2ND RD: L, 85-77 vs. Cornerstone (Mich.)

1998

1ST RD: L, 65-54 vs. Holy Names (Calif.)

1997

1ST RD: L, 79-66 vs. Urbana (Ohio)

1996

1ST RD: L, 74-66 vs. Northwest Nazarene (Idaho)

1995

1ST RD: W, 90-69 vs. Loyala (La.)

2ND RD: W, 100-84 vs. St. Ambrose (Iowa)

QUARTERFINALS: L, 91-68 vs. William Jewell (Mo.)

1992

1ST RD: W, 75-63 vs. Northwest Nazarene (Idaho)

QUARTERFINALS: W, 102-90 vs. MidAmerica Nazarene (Kan.)

SEMIFINALS: L, 95-89 vs. Grace (Ind.)

1991

1ST RD: L, 80-77 vs. Oklahoma City





SCORING (1,000-point scorers)

1. Jon Ziegler (2004-07)	2,099
2. Tom Raabe (1967-71)	2,016
3. Chandler Folkerts (2013-17)	1,963
4. John Puelz (1989-92)	1,955
5. Noah Schutte (2020--)	1,783
6. Carter Kent (2018-22)	1,699
7. Devin Smith (1989-92)	1,659
8. Rick Dietze (2001-04)	1,625
9. Matt List (1988-91)	1,608
10. Tanner Shuck (2016-20)	1,579
11. Ben Buhr (2005-08)	1,479
12. Scott Ernstmeyer (1993-96)	1,417
13. Scott Beck (2003-06)	1,406
14. Porter Birtell (2009-13)	1,390
15. Gage Smith (2018-23)	1,355
16. Ryan Kness (1993-95)	1,354
17. Tim Schroeder (1997, 99-01)	1,346
18. Darin Engelbart (1992-96)	1,335
18. Travis Wischmeier (1999-2002)	1,335
20. Justin Wiersema (2018-22)	1,276
21. Bret Walter (1993-96)	1,248
22. Brevin Sloup (2016-20)	1,246
23. Josh Dahlke (1995-99)	1,221
24. Brent Cumber (1986-89)	1,210
25. Eli Ziegler (2013-17)	1,194
26. Robby Thomas (2012-16)	1,170
27. Ben Limback (1995-99)	1,158
28. Scott Hannon (2005-08)	1,149
29. Mark Cutler (1980-84)	1,126
30. Drew Olson (2000-03)	1,123
31. Jason Jisa (2003-05)	1,117
32. Tyler Byrd (2008-12)	1,113
33. Derek Engelbart (1998-2001)	1,105
34. Joel Haywood (2011-15)	1,091
35. Mike Works (1990-92)	1,039

Points, Single Game

1. Jon Ziegler (2/17/07)	47
2. Robert Buchholz Jr. (1928-29 season)	45
3. Tom Raabe (1968-69 season)	43
4. Al Buuck (1962-63 season)	41
5. Tom Raabe / Earl Westbrook	40

REBOUNDS

1. Matt List (1988-91)	928
2. Gage Smith (2018-23)	899
3. Chandler Folkerts (2013-17)	868
4. Scott Beck (2003-06)	781
5. Jon Ziegler (2004-07)	762
6. Scott Ernstmeyer (1993-96)	730
7. Devin Smith (1989-92)	729
8. Noah Schutte (2020--)	716
8. Porter Birtell (2009-13)	712
9. Sam Huebner (2008-11)	684
10. Robby Thomas (2012-16)	645
11. Glen Snodgrass (1995-98)	607
12. Ryan Kness (1993-95)	599
13. Elliot Rea (1994-97)	584
14. Ben Limback (1996-99)	505

ASSISTS

1. Darin Engelbart (1992-96)	657
2. Mike Works (1990-92)	496
3. Scott Beck (2003-06)	446
4. Ben Limback (1996-99)	388
5. Travis Wischmeier (1999-02)	340
6. Joel Haywood (2011-15)	334
7. Carter Kent (2018-22)	324
8. Tyler Byrd (2008-12)	320
9. Justin Wiersema (2018-22)	300
10. Jon Ziegler (2004-07)	287
11. Jason Boyd (1996-98)	278
12. Gage Smith (2018-23)	276
13. Eli Ziegler (2013-17)	273
14. Matt List (1988-91)	272
15. Tanner Shuck (2016-20)	262

STEALS

1. Ben Limback (1996-99)	229
2. Jon Ziegler (2004-07)	223
3. Scott Ernstmeyer (1993-96)	213
4. Scott Beck (2003-06)	207
5. Mike Works (1990-92)	194
6. Matt List (1990-92)	193
6. Joel Wallschlaeger (1991-94)	193
8. Darin Engelbart (1992-96)	192
9. Devin Smith (1989-92)	164
10. Jason Jisa (2003-05)	159

BLOCKS

1. Robby Thomas (2012-16)	204
2. Glen Snodgrass (1995-98)	188
3. Scott Ernstmeyer (1993-96)	173
4. Chandler Folkerts (2013-17)	142
5. Marcus Wernke (2003-05)	109
6. Matt Hoffart (1991-94)	106
6. Sam Huebner (2008-11)	106
8. Jason Jisa (2003-05)	96
9. Chuol Biel (2018-20)	91



Gage Smith



National Tournament Facts

The 2024 trip to nationals will mark the 13th all-time appearance on the national stage for the program. Head Coach Ben Limback has now led the Bulldogs to four national tournament appearances, including the national tourney trips in 2020, 2022 and 2023. In the first nine appearances, all presided over by former head coach Grant Schmidt, the Bulldogs went a combined 11-9. Limback played for the national qualifying teams of 1996, 1997 and 1998.

Concordia has won its first-round game at the national tournament six times. Two teams in program history have reached at least the semifinals: the 1991-92 squad and the 2004-05 team (national runner up). The 1994-95, 2002-03 and 2021-22 squads advanced to the national quarterfinals. The 2021-22 team enjoyed a dream season while led by NAIA Second Team All-American Carter Kent. The Bulldogs dominated in the first two rounds held in Omaha, where they won by scores of 96-78 over Indiana University Northwest and 90-67 over Marian University (Ind.). Concordia then advanced to the round of 16 in Kansas City, Mo., where it knocked off Indiana University Kokomo, 75-65, before being eliminated in the quarterfinals by Talladega College (Ala.), 77-69.

During the '22 run at the national tournament, Noah Schutte burst onto the scene and was named to the NAIA Men's Basketball National Championship All-Tournament Team. During the four games, Schutte averaged 20.0 points and 9.8 rebounds while shooting 63.4 percent from the field. Of the 15 players on the postseason roster, six have appeared in at least one national tournament game: Schutte, Joel Baker, Brad Bennett, Zac Kulus, Tristan Smith and Jaxon Weyand. Last season, the Bulldogs pushed No. 2 seed Oklahoma Wesleyan to the brink in a 72-70 loss.

The 2004-05 team set a still-intact school record with 32 wins that season. On the way to reaching the national title game, the '04-5 group defeated Trinity Christian (Ill.), Flagler (Fla.), Cornerstone (Mich.) and Cedarville (Ohio) in Point Lookout, Mo. The Bulldogs then fell at the hands of Walsh (Ohio) in the program's lone national title game appearance.

Concordia's Marcus Wernke was the NAIA Division II national tournament record holder for most blocked shots in a game (nine) and most blocked shots in a single tournament (23). Both of those feats were accomplished in 2005. Jason Jisa was also honored with the Hustle Award at the '05 tourney. NAIA Division II came to an end with a fusion of the two divisions following the 2019-20 season.

Schmidt led the Bulldogs to their first-ever national tournament appearance in 1991. At that time, the NAIA was still just one division for basketball. Four members of the 1990-91 squad have been inducted into the Concordia Athletic Hall of Fame: Matt List, John Puelz, Devin Smith and Mike Works. The latter three were also members of the 1991-92 squad that broke through with the program's first-ever national tournament win.

On March 12, 2020, the Bulldogs played in the final NAIA Division II men's basketball game ever. The remainder of the tournament following Concordia's 87-84 loss to Ottawa (Kan.) was shut down due to COVID-19. No player on the current roster was part of that team. The contest took place at the Sanford Pentagon in Sioux Falls, S.D.

GPAC Standings

Table with 5 columns: School, GPAC, %, Overall, %

GPAC All-Conference

FIRST TEAM

- G - Silas Bennion, Jr. Jamestown
C - Ely Doble, Sr. Morningside
F - Alex Van Kalsbeek, So. Northwestern
G - Lucas Lorenzen, So. Dordt
G - Derek Merwick, Jr. Midland
G - Luke Rankin, Jr. Dordt
F - Noah Schutte, Sr. Concordia
G - Joey Skoff, Sr. Morningside
F - Tristan Smith, Jr. Concordia
G - Matthew Stilwill, Sr. Briar Cliff
G - Reggie Thomas, So. Hastings

SECOND TEAM

- G - Brad Bennett, Jr. Concordia
G - Dillon Carlson, Sr. Northwestern
G - Bryce Coppock, Sr. Dordt
G - Jakob Dobney, Jr. Dakota Wesleyan
G - Jack Dotzler, Sr. Morningside
F - Jimmy Linas, Sr. Jamestown
F - Tyrique McMurrin, Sr. Hastings
F - Craig Sterk, Sr. Northwestern
G - Brady Timm, Jr. Doane

- Player of the Year: Reggie Thomas, Hastings
Defensive Player of the Year: Jimmy Linas, Jamestown
Freshman of the Year: Randy Rosenquist, DWU
Coach of the Year: Todd Raridon, Hastings

GPAC Tournament Results

Quarterfinals - Wednesday, Feb. 28

- (1) Northwestern def. (8) Dakota Wesleyan, 78-65
(4) Morningside def. (5) Jamestown, 89-72
(3) Concordia def. (6) Dordt, 87-83
(2) Hastings def. (7) Briar Cliff, 76-61

Semifinals - Saturday, March 2

- (4) Morningside def. (1) Northwestern, 93-83
(2) Hastings def. (3) Concordia, 82-78

Championship - Tuesday, March 5

- (2) Hastings def. (4) Morningside, 77-61





#2 TREY SCHEEF



6-1 • Senior • Guard
Wahoo, Neb.
Wahoo HS



#3 JOEL BAKER



6-0 • Senior • Guard
Alliance, Neb.
Alliance HS



#4 | ZAC KULUS



6-0 • Sophomore • Guard
Bennington, Neb.
Concordia Omaha HS



#5 | JAXON WEYAND



5-11 • Sophomore • Guard
Crete, Neb.
Milford HS





#10 | BROOKS KISSINGER



6-3 • Freshman • Guard
Ashland, Neb.
Ashland-Greenwood HS

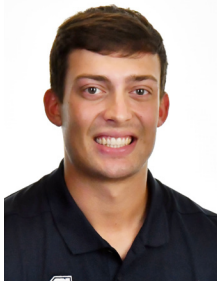
#11 BRAYSON MUELLER



6-5 • Junior • Forward
Firth, Neb.
Norris HS



#12 | NOAH SCHUTTE



6-4 • Senior • Forward
Laurel, Neb.
Laurel-Concord-Coleridge HS

#14 | JAXON STUEVE



6-4 • Freshman • Guard/Fwd
Papillion, Neb.
Bellevue West HS





#20 | LUKAS HELMS

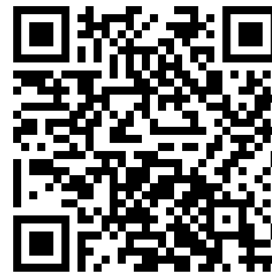


6-6 • Freshman • Forward
Lincoln, Neb.
Lincoln Southwest HS

#22 | TRISTAN SMITH



6-5 • Junior • Forward
Elizabeth, Colo.
Elizabeth HS



#24 | HAYDEN FRANK



6-2 • Freshman • Guard
Malcolm, Neb.
Malcolm HS

#30 | BRANDT VAN DYKE



6-8 • Freshman • Forward
Lawton, Iowa
Sioux City East HS





PLAYER PROFILES

#33 | BRADLEY BENNETT



6-1 • Junior • Guard
Elkhorn, Neb.
Mt. Michael Benedictine HS

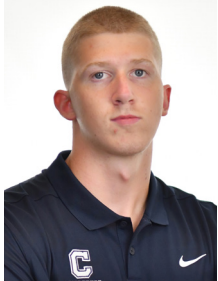
#34 | TYLER HARRE



6-5 • Freshman • G/F
Scottsbluff, Neb.
Scottsbluff HS / UNK



#50 | TONY TUBRICK V



6-9 • Junior • Forward
Omaha, Neb.
Creighton Prep



BULLDOGS GRAB NATIONAL SPOTLIGHT WITH UNIQUE MIX OF VETERANS AND NEWCOMERS



Published on Feb. 14, 2024

Keep winning and the outsiders will have no choice but to pay attention. Such is the case for the 2023-24 Concordia University Men's Basketball team, which has had to earn its way onto the national radar. Thanks to an eight-game winning streak featuring two top 25 wins, the Bulldogs find themselves soaring in the national rankings. This comes after the Bulldogs received nary a sniff in the first six official NAIA coaches' polls of this season.

In the NAIA coaches' poll released on Feb. 14, Concordia crashed the party in landing at No. 21. In addition, the "Road to Muni Podcast" hosted by NAIA Hoops Report invited Head Coach Ben Limback onto this week's show. NAIA Hoops Report ranks the Bulldogs at No. 15 while Victory Sports Network has them all the way up to No. 8 and Massey Ratings slots them in at No. 11.

As Limback said on the podcast, "I think this is a unique team where you have a good returning class. Noah Schutte's been on the NAIA All-Tournament Team, and he's had a great year. Tristan Smith has been tremendous this year – a double-double machine. Then you have all these young guys paired with them. That's been the challenge – the consistency and day-to-day things. I also told our guys we have a lot of room for growth with this team."

The growth has been immense since the calendar flipped to 2024. Limback and his staff already had a good start on the 2023-24 roster knowing they would return proven veterans like Schutte, Smith and Brad Bennett. Those three Bulldogs have not disappointed while providing leadership and production on a consistent basis. However, Concordia would not be where it is currently with those three players alone. Other returners have made key contributions, and the Bulldogs just might have the best freshman class in the

entire GPAC. Two of those rookies, Lukas Helms and Jaxon Stueve, have cracked the starting lineup.

From a bench perspective, the rotation has also regularly included Joel Baker, Hayden Frank, Tyler Harre, Brooks Kissinger, Zac Kulus, Brayson Mueller, Brandt Van Dyke and Jaxon Weyand. The immense depth gives Limback plenty of options and allows him to keep his players fresh. The problem lies in finding enough minutes for each of them.

"From day one we felt like we had the guys back from last year that had the ability," Limback said. "When your five man is Tristan Smith, you can really run. He can rebound and handle it. That changes the way you can play. I thought the depth we had throughout our team would enhance our speed and ability to push. We have a lot of guys who can get out there and run. Guys like Lukas Helms and Jaxon Stueve are really good at running. I think it's a combination of the style we like and then our personnel and depth."

With an average of 88.6 points per game, the '23-24 team is in line to challenge the school single season record of 88.7 by the 2016-17 squad. A hallmark of this current club is its ability to play together and play efficiently. Concordia shoots 51.3 percent from the floor and 37.4 percent from 3-point range. In the preseason, Schutte hinted at what we might see this winter. Every time out, the Bulldogs want to play fast and score in transition.

As Schutte said back in October, "We have a lot of young talent that I think is really good. We're looking to create that depth this year, especially in the backcourt. I think we have a lot of guys that can stretch the floor and a lot of athletic and quick guys. We'll have a lot of tempo this year, which I think will help us a lot."



Concordia pushes the tempo despite not necessarily employing a single primary point guard. It's not unusual to see Schutte or Smith bring the ball up the floor or for the Bulldogs to have five guys on the court with capabilities as ball handlers. When a defensive possession shifts to offense, the emphasis is on all five players sprinting the other way, even after a made basket for the opposition. The yields can include acrobatic dunks and open looks from 3-point range for deadeye shooters like Bennett, who just torched Dakota Wesleyan for a career-high 26 points.

It's all about keeping foes on their toes. At the same time, playing fast won't work unless the team is also playing smart. "Whoever gets it, we run to our spots," Limback said. "That can be good and bad at times. With this team, it's learning that we don't have to shoot it every time we push it. Our shot selection is getting better. That's the struggle for me as a coach - how much freedom do you give them and how much do you have to pull the reins back a little bit? I think we're becoming better decision makers while playing fast."

The dynamics as they are, it was natural that the Bulldogs would need some time to mesh. They dropped games early in conference play to perennially strong GPAC rivals Morningside and Northwestern and fell by a single point twice - to NCAA Division II San Francisco State and at fellow GPAC co-leader Hastings. Along the way, the analytics have taken a liking to this team's efficiency and foreshadowed the string of victories Concordia has rattled off in January and February.

As senior Joel Baker said after a victory, "We're really confident. The young guys are getting better every time we step on the floor." One of those young guns is the Malcolm product Frank, who is averaging in double figures in scoring during the streak. After a 17-point performance in a CIT victory, Frank gushed about the harmony this team seems to have found between coaching staff and players.

Said Frank then, "Our coaches trust us as players and as players we have confidence in each other. It doesn't matter who shoots the ball, we believe it's going to go in every time. Our coaches teach us and give us the knowledge. Our scouting reports are almost perfect. They prepare us to the best of our ability. We just have to go out and play."

The makeup of the roster plays into what the Bulldogs want to do each time out. Limback and lead assistant Ryan Tegtmeier seem to be collecting 6-foot-4 to 6-foot-6 wing players like they're trading cards. There isn't a 7-footer on this roster, but there's length one-through-five in the starting lineup with no player shorter than 6-foot-1. Most opponents can't help but have some matchup issues in response to the combination of overall athleticism, length and perimeter shooting prowess.

As Limback said, "That length and athleticism allows you to attack from a lot of areas. Defensively, I think it allows us to play different lineups. You can have Tristan Smith switch and guard a point guard because of his agility and speed."

Down the stretch, Concordia's improvement defensively may be the most important factor as to whether it can win the GPAC regular season title or make a run at the national tournament. What seems clear at this point is that the Bulldogs are capable of achieving those things. Two seasons after a historic 2021-22 campaign, Concordia is hoping to write another special chapter in the program's history.

When asked about the GPAC race on the Road to Muni Podcast, Limback replied, "This is my 11th year. This is a unique situation where we have that many teams tied for first and fighting for position. There's a lot yet that needs to shake out, but to be in that mix with some great teams is where you want to be this time of year. Every team in the country sets goals to be in that mix. We're pretty blessed to be in that position right now."





GPAC
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CHAMPION
2024 MEN'S BASKETBALL

BULLDOGS
5

BULLDOGS
4

BULLDOGS
3

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