



2009 Missouri Valley Conference Softball

Missouri Valley Conference
1818 Chouteau Ave. • St. Louis, MO 63103
Phone: 314.421.0339 **Fax:** 314.421.0620
Website: www.mvc-sports.com

MVC Softball Contact
Jeremiah Ingram, Assistant Commissioner
ingram@mvc.org
Office: 314-244-2312 Cell: 314-435-4776

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Missouri Valley Conference Announces Softball All-Conference Teams Oltman Wins Third Pitcher of the Year Honor; Sinkler Takes Player of the Year Honors

ST. LOUIS -- Regular-season champion Creighton swept the league's pitcher and player of the year awards, while UNI claimed the top newcomer and coaching staff of the year honors at the annual softball banquet at Weaver Ridge Golf Club in Peoria, Ill.

Creighton's Tara Oltman was named Missouri Valley Conference Pitcher of the Year for a third-consecutive season, becoming the only pitcher in league history to win the honor three times. Bluejay teammate Renae Sinkler was named the conference's Player of the Year and UNI freshman Mackenzie Daigh was tabbed as the Newcomer of the Year. UNI's coaching staff of Ryan Jacobs, Julie Gerdes and Stephanie Winter were named the league's staff of the year.

Oltman is the league leader in wins, innings, strikeouts, complete games and shutouts, including one over then No. 11 Arizona. She has held opponents to a .163 average, also best in the league. Oltman has posted a scant 0.46 earned run average in Valley games, the fifth-best single-season conference mark in history. She is currently sixth all-time in strikeouts and closed the regular-season by moving into the Valley's top spot for career wins with her 85th. She ranks fifth in the nation in ERA - one of seven with a sub-1.00 number - and ranks among the nation's top-15 in wins (6th), strikeouts (14th) and shutouts (8th). She is one of just three pitchers in league history to repeat as Pitcher of the Year and is the first to win the award in three-straight seasons.

Sinkler was the top Bluejay hitter in league games with a .377 average, six home runs, 11 runs scored and 12 driven in. Overall the junior led the league in slugging and on base percentage and tied for the overall lead with 12 home runs. Her 34 runs batted in were the 4th-best number in the conference. She ranks in the top five in hitting, slugging, on base percentage, home runs, total bases and runs batted in. Sinkler is the third Creighton player to be named MVC Player of the Year (Stacy Rybar, Abby Johnson).

Daigh made an immediate impact on the Panther line up, hitting .321 in league games with 17 runs scored and eight runs batted in. Overall, she started all 53 games in which she appeared and was UNI's third-leading hitter and scored 38 runs with a nearly .400 on base percentage. She delivered 14 multi-hit games and drove in 22 runs. In league play she ranks in the top-10 in runs and hits. She is UNI's second-ever Newcomer of the Year, and first since 1999 (Lindsay Wood).

UNI's Ryan Jacobs, Julie Gerdes and Stephanie Winter took home top coaching staff honors after orchestrating a 14-win improvement, a 7.5 game improvement in Missouri Valley play and the most conference wins in school history. This year's regular-season finish was the top Valley finish since 2000.

In all, 28 players were honored as part of either the first or second all-conference teams. Eleven of the 17 first team players are slated to return next season.

League awards are voted on by the head softball coaches.

2009 MVC Softball All-Conference Team

Pos.	Name, School	Yr.	Hometown/HS
P	Tara Oltman, Creighton*^@	Jr.	Cortland, Neb./Beatrice
P	Jenna DeLong, Drake	So.	Dalton Gardens, Idaho/Coeur d'Alene
C	Heather Gerritse, Wichita State	So.	Cypress, Calif./Cypress
1B	Renae Sinkler, Creighton*	Jr.	Lincoln, Neb./Northeast
2B	Michelle Koch, Creighton	Jr.	Beatrice, Neb./Beatrice
SS	Meredith Simpson, Indiana State*	Sr.	Mission Viejo, Calif./Capo Valley
3B	Abby Olson, Illinois State	So.	Hartsburg, Ill./Hartsburg-Emden
OF	Rachel Gerking, UNI	Jr.	Spirit Lake, Iowa/Spirit Lake
OF	Megan Machovec, UNI	Jr.	DeWitt, Iowa/Central
OF	Jen Stahlhut, Evansville	So.	Troy, Ill./Triad
DP-P	Katie Armour, Indiana State	Sr.	New Palestine, Ind./New Palestine
DP-U	Kylie Wagner, Evansville	Fr.	Orange, Calif./El Modena
P	Ashley Birdsong, Bradley	Sr.	Otis, Ore./Taft
DP-U	Erin Bly, Drake	So.	Frankfort, Ill./Lincoln Way East
DP-P	Amber Smith, Illinois State*^!	Sr.	Fairfield, Calif./Fairfield
SS	Jessie Smith, Missouri State	Sr.	Blue Springs, Mo./Blue Springs South
P	Darcy Wood, Indiana State!	Sr.	Greenwood, Ind./Center Grove

Player of the Year: Renae Sinkler, Creighton

Pitcher of the Year: Tara Oltman, Creighton

Newcomer of the Year: Mackenzie Daigh, UNI

Coaching Staff of the Year: UNI (Ryan Jacobs, Julie Gerdes, Stephanie Winter)

2009 MVC Softball All-Conference Second Team

Pos.	Name, School	Yr.	Hometown/HS
1B	Alycia Bachkora, Bradley	Sr.	Overland Park, Kan./Notre Dame de Sion
3B	Brittney Balduf, UNI	Sr.	Mason City, Iowa/Mason City
SS	Mackenzie Daigh, UNI	Fr.	Bucyrus, Kan./Berean Christian
2B	Alicia Garza, Southern Illinois^	Jr.	Lafayette, Ind./McCutcheon
DP-P	Jen Larsen, UNI*	Jr.	Moline, Ill./Moline
SS	Elena Leon, Drake	Jr.	West Des Moines, Iowa/Valley
2B	Kara L'Huillier, Wichita State	Jr.	Flower Mound, Texas/Flower Mound
C	Kelly Papesh, UNI	Sr.	Minooka, Ill./Minooka
SS	Niki Stansell, Illinois State	Jr.	Meeker, Okla./Meeker
3B	Katie Wagner, Southern Illinois	Sr.	Mt. Vernon, Ill./Mt. Vernon Township
OF	Jessica Wakasugi, Creighton*	Sr.	Woodbury, Minn./Woodbury

*2008 First Team; ^2007 First Team