

AMERICA EAST CONFERENCE

By Craig Haley

PREDICTIONS

1. Boston University
2. Vermont
3. Maryland-Baltimore County
4. Hartford
5. Binghamton
6. Albany
7. New Hampshire
8. Maine
9. Stony Brook

ALL-CONFERENCE TEAM

FIRST TEAM

Pos.	Name	School	Ht.	Wt.	Class
G	Mike Trimboli	Vermont	6-7	180	Sr.
G	Joe Zeglinski	Hartford	6-0	185	Jr.
F/G	John Holland	Boston University	6-5	190	So.
F	Marqus Blakely	Vermont	6-5	220	Jr.
F	Darryl Proctor	Maryland-Baltimore County	6-4	230	Sr.

SECOND TEAM

Pos.	Name	School	Ht.	Wt.	Class
G	Tyrece Gibbs	New Hampshire	6-3	205	Sr.
G	Jay Greene	Maryland-Baltimore County	5-8	155	Sr.
G	Maurice Joseph	Vermont	6-4	190	Jr.
G	Corey Lowe	Boston University	6-2	200	Jr.
G	Mark Soboye	Maine	6-6	190	Jr.

PLAYER OF THE YEAR

MARQUIS BLAKELY
F, Vermont

NEWCOMER OF THE YEAR

ANTHONY RAFFA
G, Albany

HONOR ROLL

- Best Shooter:** Joe Zeglinski, Hartford
Best Rebounder: Marqus Blakely, Vermont
Best Playmaker: Jay Greene, UMBC
Best Defenders: Marqus Blakely, Vermont
Most Versatile: Marqus Blakely, Vermont
Best NBA Prospect: Marqus Blakely, Vermont

ALBANY

A lot has changed since the Great Danes' 2006 and '07 squads advanced to the NCAA Tournament. This season, they will depend on some talented newcomers as forward Brian Connelly and guard Tim Ambrose, an America East All-Rookie selection, are the team's only reliable returning scorers. Freshman guard Anthony Raffa and swingman Louis Barraza will provide a lot of offense and junior college transfer Michael Johnson could emerge as the starting point guard. Coach Will Brown doesn't shy away from a tough non-conference schedule, which this season includes a game against defending national champion Kansas.

GREAT DANES AT A GLANCE

COACH: Will Brown — At Albany and overall: 91-108, 7 years
2007-08 RECORD: 15-15 overall; 10-6 America East (Tie/2nd)

2008-09 HONORS CANDIDATE: Brian Connelly, Anthony Raffa
KEEP AN EYE ON: Raffa, a combo guard, is a scorer, which the Great Danes need this season. He might become a starter.

RETURNING STARTERS (3): Brian Connelly, F, 6-8, 225, Sr. (10.1 ppg, 5.3 rpg); Jerel Hastings, F, 6-5, 215, Sr. (4.9 ppg, 3.2 rpg); Jimmie Covington, F/C, 6-7, 245, Sr. (1.7 ppg, 1.9 rpg)

RETURNING KEY RESERVES: Tim Ambrose, G, 6-0, 220, So. (7.2 ppg, 2.8 rpg); Al Turley, F/C, 6-7, 285, So. (2.9 ppg, 2.3 rpg); Brett Gifford, C, 6-11, 260, Jr. (2.1 ppg, 2.2 rpg)

NEWCOMERS TO WATCH: Logan Aronhalt, F, 6-4, 215; Anthony Raffa, G, 6-1, 160; Jake Lindfors, F, 6-9, 220; Michael Johnson, G, 6-1, 195 (Blinn College transfer); Louis Barraza, G/F, 6-5, 200 (Yavapai Community College transfer)
STARTERS LOST (2): Brian Lillis, G/F, 6-5, 225 (16.1 ppg, 6.0 rpg, 3.5 apg); Brent Wilson, F, 6-8, 240 (9.6 ppg, 5.8 rpg)

BINGHAMTON

It will be hard to match UMBC's successful model from last season, but coach Kevin Broadus has turned over much of the roster with transfers. Point guard Emanuel "Tiki" Mayben, who played one season at UMass, has excellent court vision and will get the ball to small forward Sean Watson, a scorer and former Montana signee; guard Malik Alvin, a former UTEP signee; and Gonzaga transfer Theo Davis, a 6-9 rebounder who will be eligible in late December. The Bearcats aren't big, but returning starter Reggie Fuller does the grunt work. Leading scorer Lazar Trifunovic transferred to Radford.

BEARCATS AT A GLANCE

COACH: Kevin Broadus — At Binghamton and overall: 14-16, 1 year

2007-08 RECORD: 14-16 overall; 9-7 America East (Tie/4th)

2008-09 HONORS CANDIDATES: Emanuel "Tiki" Mayben, Sean Watson

KEEP AN EYE ON: Watson, who may have only one remaining season of eligibility, is a long, lean scorer.

RETURNING STARTERS (2): Reggie Fuller, F, 6-6, 195, Sr. (6.6 ppg, 5.7 rpg); Chretien Lukusa, G, 6-2, 210, So. (4.3 ppg, 2.0 rpg)
RETURNING KEY RESERVES: Dwayne Jackson, G, 6-3, 205, Sr. (8.5 ppg, 3.1 rpg); Brandon Herbert, G, 6-0, 180, So. (3.8 ppg, 1.4 rpg); Jaan Montgomery, C, 6-11, 290, Sr. (0.9 ppg, 1.6 rpg)

NEWCOMERS TO WATCH: Emanuel "Tiki" Mayben, G, 6-3, 180 (Hudson Valley CC transfer); Malik Alvin, G, 6-0, 175 (Chipola College transfer); Sean Watson, F, 6-5, 185 (Howard junior college transfer); Theo Davis, F, 6-9, 230 (Gonzaga transfer)

STARTERS LOST (3): Lazar Trifunovic, F, 6-8, 230 (14.0 ppg, 7.1 rpg); Mike Gordon, G, 6-0, 185 (12.5 ppg, 4.0 rpg, 3.8 apg, 66 steals); Richard Forbes, G, 6-0, 180 (11.4, 2.4 apg)

BOSTON UNIVERSITY

Picked by America East coaches last season to win their first conference title since 2001-02, the Terriers were set back by myriad injuries, none bigger than the foot injury that kept shooting guard Tyler Morris out of 11 games. Healthier this season, the Terriers expect to build off a 9-3 finish after beginning last season 5-14. The backcourt is strong, as Corey Lowe was second in the America East with an 18.1-point average. John Holland followed Morris as conference Rookie of the Year and Carlos Strong comes off the bench as a scorer. Center Scott Brittain has help from 6-8 freshman forward Jake O'Brien.

TERRIERS AT A GLANCE

COACH: Dennis Wolff — At Boston University: 230-184, 14 years; overall: 260-202, 16 years

2007-08 RECORD: 14-17 overall; 9-7 America East (Tie/4th)

2008-09 HONORS CANDIDATES: Corey Lowe, John Holland, Tyler Morris

KEEP AN EYE ON: Morris, set back by a foot injury last season, figures to get back to a high level this season. He averaged 13.4 points per game two seasons ago.

RETURNING STARTERS (5): Corey Lowe, G, 6-2, 200, Jr. (18.1 ppg, 3.7 rpg, 3.3 apg); John Holland, F/G, 6-5, 190, So. (11.4 ppg, 5.0 rpg); Scott Brittain, F, 6-9, 221, Jr. (10.0 ppg, 6.3 rpg); Tyler Morris, G, 6-2, 190, Jr. (6.5 ppg, 3.0 rpg); Matt Wolff, G/F, 6-6, 215, Sr. (5.6 ppg, 4.3 rpg)

RETURNING KEY RESERVES: Carlos Strong, G, 6-3, 215, Jr. (11.1 ppg, 3.6 rpg); Marques Johnson, G, 5-11, 170, Sr. (3.3 ppg, 2.8 apg); Valdas Sirutis, F, 6-7, 215, Jr. (1.2 ppg, 1.6 rpg)

NEWCOMERS TO WATCH: Jake O'Brien, F, 6-8, 215; Jeff Pelage, F/C, 6-9, 240

STARTERS LOST (0): None

HARTFORD

The best way for the Hawks to celebrate their 25th season in Division I is to build off their most successful campaign — 18 wins and a trip to the America East title game. They live off making 3-pointers — over nine per game last season — with all-league guard Joe Zeglinski drilling 103 of them. With burly Warren McLendon leaving the team, rebounding will be a concern. Gritty forward Michael Turner has an all-around style and 6-8 Morgan Sabia was a starter by season's end, so the top unit basically returns intact. Drake Uu is an influential freshman.

HAWKS AT A GLANCE

COACH: Dan Leibovitz — At Hartford and overall: 31-34, 2 years

2007-08 RECORD: 18-16 overall; 10-6 America East (Tie/2nd)

2008-09 HONORS CANDIDATE: Joe Zeglinski

KEEP AN EYE ON: Small forward Michael Turner led the team in rebounds (190) and assists (120) last season. Now it's his turn to score more.

RETURNING STARTERS (4): Joe Zeglinski, G, 6-0, 185, Jr. (16.2 ppg, 4.0 rpg, 41 percent 3-pt shooting); Jaret Von Rosenberg, G, 6-2, 185, Sr. (9.1 ppg, 3.6 apg); Michael Turner, G/F, 6-5, 215, Sr. (8.9 ppg, 5.6 rpg, 3.5 apg, 72 steals); Anthony Minor, F/C, 6-6, 200, So. (4.2 ppg, 1.9 rpg)

RETURNING KEY RESERVES: Morgan Sabia, F, 6-8, 200, So. (10.2 ppg, 3.6 rpg); Kevin Estes, F, 6-7, 230, So. (3.7 ppg, 1.7 rpg); Andres Torres, G, 5-10, 170, So. (2.0 ppg, 0.7 rpg); David Bookman, F, 6-7, 225, Jr. (1.2 ppg, 0.3 rpg)

NEWCOMERS TO WATCH: Drake Uu, G/F, 6-5, 210; Clayton Brothers, G, 6-1, 170; Charles White, G, 6-1, 170; Malcolm Campbell, C, 6-9, 255

STARTERS LOST (1): Rich Baker, G, 6-1, 180 (4.1 ppg, 2.3 rpg)

MAINE

A season after losing four starters, Maine returns four this time around. Now the America East's youngest team last season hopes it has matured significantly. The Black Bears' three-guard backcourt is solid as Mark Socoby, Kaimondre Owes and Junior Bernal all averaged double figures in scoring. The 6-6 Socoby became a better outside shooter and raised his game in conference matchups, earning America East third-team honors. More production out of forward Philippe Tchekane Bofia would boost the Black Bears' frontcourt, although freshman center Svetoslav Chetinov comes aboard as an enforcer.

BLACK BEARS AT A GLANCE

COACH: Ted Woodward — At Maine and overall: 45-72, 4 years
2007-08 RECORD: 7-23 overall; 3-13 America East (Tie/8th)
2008-09 HONORS CANDIDATES: Mark Socoby, Junior Bernal
KEEP AN EYE ON: Bernal, a junior who enters his third season as a starter, gets others involved in the offense in addition to being a steady scorer.

RETURNING STARTERS (4): Mark Socoby, G, 6-6, 190, Jr. (14.6 ppg, 5.7 rpg, 38.9 percent on 3-pointers); Kaimondre Owes, G, 6-3, 195, Sr. (12.5 ppg, 2.9 rpg, 2.4 apg); Junior Bernal, G, 6-5, 200, Jr. (10.8 ppg, 4.7 rpg, 3.0 apg); Jordan Cook, C/F, 6-10, 230, Jr. (3.6 ppg, 2.8 rpg)

RETURNING KEY RESERVES: Philippe Tchekane Bofia, F, 6-6, 230, Sr. (6.1 ppg, 3.3 rpg); Sean McNally, F, 6-7, 230, So. (5.5 ppg, 4.9 rpg); Jason Hight, G, 6-3, 182, Sr. (3.5 ppg, 2.4 rpg); Troy Barnes, F, 6-7, 205, So. (3.3 ppg, 2.3 rpg); Robby Hanzlik, G, 6-3, 210, So. (2.7 ppg, 1.2 rpg)

NEWCOMERS TO WATCH: Svetoslav Chetinov, C, 6-9, 250; Doran Mitchell, G, 6-0, 190; Gerald McEmore, G, 6-3, 185
STARTER LOST (1): Brian Andre, C, 6-9, 295 (9.6 ppg, 5.5 rpg)

MARYLAND-BALTIMORE CO.

Hustle and desire measure up more than height for the defending champion's two returning all-league players: Darryl Proctor is a 6-4 power forward and Jay Greene is a 5-8 point guard. The steady Proctor leaves everything on either end of the court and Greene dished a school-record 236 assists last season. The Retrievers, though, suffered huge senior losses, meaning improving swingman Matt Spadafora, a starter during the stretch drive, will have to raise his scoring, and transfers Bakari Smith and Rich Flemming will have to step in with some of the instant success that Proctor, Ray Barbosa and Cavell Johnson enjoyed last season.

RETRIEVERS AT A GLANCE

COACH: Randy Monroe — At UMBC and overall: 57-66, 4 years
2007-08 RECORD: 24-9 overall; 13-3 America East (1st)
2008-09 HONORS CANDIDATES: Darryl Proctor, Jay Greene
KEEP AN EYE ON: Transfer Bakari Smith has a solid floor game to offset key player losses. The combo guard could step in as a starter.

RETURNING STARTERS (3): Darryl Proctor, F, 6-4, 230, Sr. (15.1 ppg, 8.4 rpg, 60 steals); Jay Greene, G, 5-8, 155, Sr. (8.8 ppg, 7.2 apg); Justin Fry, F/C, 6-9, 220, Jr. (3.9 ppg, 2.6 rpg)

RETURNING KEY RESERVES: Matt Spadafora, G/F, 6-5, 195, Jr. (5.9 ppg, 3.0 rpg); Uwem Eshietedoho, F, 6-8, 225, Sr. (0.4 ppg, 2.2 rpg); Frank McKnight, G, 6-1, 175, So. (0.3 ppg, 0.2 apg)

NEWCOMERS TO WATCH: Bakari Smith, G, 6-3, 185 (Montgomery CC transfer); Rich Flemming, F, 6-7, 205 (Fairfield transfer); Chauncey Gilliam, G/F, 6-4, 215

STARTERS LOST (2): Ray Barbosa, G, 6-2, 185 (16.5 ppg, 4.1 rpg); Brian Hodges, G, 6-3, 200 (14.0 ppg, 3.3 rpg)

NEW HAMPSHIRE

The 2-10 record in games decided by six or fewer points last season was ugly, but being close so many times has the Wildcats envisioning a turnaround. Their deeper roster and numerous 3-point shooters hint to significant improvement. Three double-figure scorers return in guards Tyrece Gibbs, Alvin Abreu and Eric Gilchrese, while James Madison transfer Colbey Santos steps into the lineup, rebounder Radar Onguetou returns from a knee injury and Tyrone Conley, like Abreu, comes off an America East all-rookie season. In his fourth season, coach Bill Herrion now has a roster of his players in place.

WILDCATS AT A GLANCE

COACH: Bill Herrion — At New Hampshire: 31-52, 3 years; overall: 268-226, 17 years

2007-08 RECORD: 9-20 overall; 6-10 America East (7th)
2008-09 HONORS CANDIDATES: Tyrece Gibbs, Alvin Abreu
KEEP AN EYE ON: Herrion has preferred tough players for a long time. He has one in James Madison transfer Colbey Santos.

RETURNING STARTERS (4): Tyrece Gibbs, G, 6-3, 205, Sr. (14.4 ppg, 4.5 rpg, 3.1 apg, 40.7 percent on 3-pointers); Alvin Abreu, G, 6-2, 185, So. (12.7 ppg, 3.8 rpg); Eric Gilchrese, G, 6-0, 170, Sr. (10.2 ppg, 2.8 apg); Dane DiLiegro, C, 6-8, 240, So. (4.2 ppg, 6.3 rpg)

RETURNING KEY RESERVES: Tyrone Conley, G, 6-2, 190, So. (8.8 ppg, 2.6 rpg); Rony Tchatchoua, F, 6-6, 210, So. (4.7 ppg, 3.1 rpg); Radar Onguetou, F, 6-5, 225, So. (1.8 ppg, 4.8 rpg); James Valladares, C/F, 6-8, 225, So. (1.3 ppg, 1.7 rpg)

NEWCOMERS TO WATCH: Colbey Santos, F, 6-5, 185 (James Madison transfer); Brian Benson, F, 6-9, 205

STARTER LOST (1): Mike Christensen, F, 6-8, 230 (12.6 ppg, 6.0 rpg)

STONY BROOK

The America East's lowest-scoring team lost its top two scorers, so it's fortunate for coach Steve Pikiell that his newcomers will provide an immediate lift. Freshman point guard Bryan Dougher comes in highly regarded and Dayton transfer Desmond Adejedi will be a mountain in the middle. Still, the uptempo attack will be balanced, with forward Demetrius Young an excellent mid-range shooter and guards Michael Tyree and Nick Carter providing production off the bench. The struggling Seawolves are banking on this season being their best under Pikiell.

SEAWOLVES AT A GLANCE

COACH: Steve Pikiell — At Stony Brook: 20-67, 3 years; overall: 25-85, 4 years

2007-08 RECORD: 7-23 overall; 3-13 America East (Tie/8th)
2008-09 HONORS CANDIDATE: Demetrius Young

KEEP AN EYE ON: It's hard not to keep an eye on 6-9, 298-pound Desmond Adejedi, who will provide rebounding and will be the last line of the Seawolves' press.

RETURNING STARTERS (2): Demetrius Young, F, 6-6, 200, Sr. (6.9 ppg, 6.7 rpg, 63.8 FG pct.); Chris Martin, G, 6-1, 210, So. (4.9 ppg, 1.5 rpg)

RETURNING KEY RESERVES: Michael Tyree, G, 5-11, 175, Sr. (6.8 ppg, 1.2 rpg); Nick Carter, G, 6-1, 185, Sr. (6.2 ppg, 1.8 rpg); Jermol Paul, G/F, 6-4, 210, So. (4.0 ppg, 1.8 rpg); Eddie Castellanos, G, 6-1, 180, Jr. (2.7 ppg, 2.5 apg)

NEWCOMERS TO WATCH: Bryan Dougher, G, 6-0, 180; Desmond Adejedi, C, 6-9, 298 (Dayton transfer); Dallis Joyner, F, 6-7, 240; Jonathan Moore, G, 6-0, 190 (Monroe CC transfer)

STARTERS LOST (3): Ricky Lucas, G, 6-4, 215 (14.3 ppg, 4.8 rpg); Mitchell Beauford, G, 5-11, 185 (9.7 ppg, 2.0 apg); Emanuel Neto, C, 6-9, 245 (6.3 ppg, 7.0 rpg)

VERMONT

Statistically, Mike Trimboli is one of Vermont's all-time most accomplished players, but a trip to the NCAA Tournament has escaped his senior class. Trimboli forms a lethal combination with junior Marqus Blakely, who last season led the America East in points, rebounds and blocked shots, while becoming the first player to sweep America East Player of the Year and Defensive Player of the Year awards. Add two other returning starters, along with Michigan State transfer Maurice Joseph, and the Catamounts may reach the NAAs for the first time since former coach Tom Brennan's last three squads went from 2003-05.

CATAMOUNTS AT A GLANCE

COACH: Mike Longergan — At Vermont: 54-40, 3 years; overall: 305-128, 15 years

2007-08 RECORD: 16-15 overall; 9-7 America East (Tie/4th)

2008-09 HONORS CANDIDATES: Marqus Blakely, Mike Trimboli, Maurice Joseph

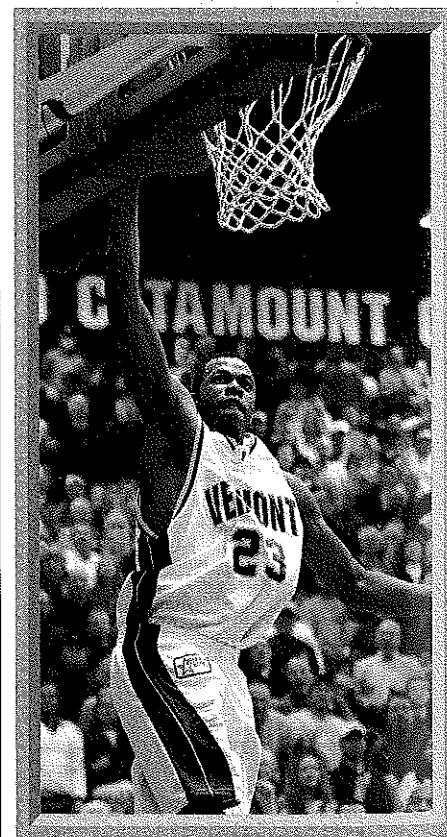
KEEP AN EYE ON: Joseph averaged nearly six points and 17 minutes per game as a sophomore at Michigan State in 2006-07.

RETURNING STARTERS (4): Marqus Blakely, F, 6-5, 220, Jr. (19.0 ppg, 11.0 rpg, 55.0 FG pct., 79 blocked shots); Mike Trimboli, G, 6-1, 180, Sr. (17.9 ppg, 4.5 apg); Evan Fjeld, F, 6-8, 215, So. (5.5 ppg, 3.3 rpg); Nick Vier, G, 6-1, 165, So. (5.1 ppg, 2.9 apg)

RETURNING KEY RESERVES: Colin McIntosh, F, 6-8, 210, Sr. (6.9 ppg, 3.4 rpg); Joey Accaoui, G, 5-10, 155, So. (4.1 ppg, 0.9 rpg); Ryan Shields, C, 6-8, 245, Sr. (1.3 ppg, 1.8 rpg)

NEWCOMERS TO WATCH: Maurice Joseph, G, 6-4, 190, (Michigan State transfer); Pat Bergmann, F/C, 6-10, 220 (redshirt last season); Jordan Clarke, F, 6-7, 230; Garvey Young, G, 6-4, 185

STARTER LOST (1): Kyle Cieplicki, G, 6-4, 195 (10.6 ppg, 3.4 rpg)



MARQUS BLAKELY • VERMONT

Photo Courtesy of University of Vermont