

These guys are the best of the best on the boards

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You hear all the time that rebounding is about who wants the ball the most. While effort and desire is a necessary component, rebounding is about much more than just sweat and struggle. Certainly, one can have all of the tools to be a great rebounder, but not the heart. But more players have the heart and desire but not the tools.

Technique, instincts, the understanding of angles, athleticism, length, hands, lower body strength, footwork, explosion skills and second-jump ability are also necessary components of rebounding. Not every great rebounder has all of those attributes, but every great rebounder has some of them.

In the end, rebounding is about productivity. The best shooters don't always score the most points, but the best rebounders almost always get the most rebounds. Period. And they get them in traffic, against any kind of team they play against. No statistic translates better from one level to another than rebounding. If a player rebounds at a high rate in college, it is a good bet that he will rebound at a high rate in the pros.

With that in mind, here are my top 10 rebounders for the 2009-2010 college basketball season:

### 1. [Luke Harangody](#), Notre Dame

The national player of the year race is tough to handicap this season, but Harangody would be my preseason choice. No player is likely to be as productive in so many key areas. While he scores at a very high rate, he rebounds at just as impressive a rate. Harangody finished in the top 2 in the Big East in rebounding the past two seasons, finishing second last season only to Pitt's [DeJuan Blair](#). He rebounds at both ends and is especially productive on the defensive end. He has size, strength and toughness, but what sets him apart is his feet. Harangody is light on his feet and moves them very well to chase down the ball. Don't be surprised to see him lead the league in scoring and rebounding, just as he did as a sophomore.

### 2. [Patrick Patterson](#), Kentucky

Patterson should have been much higher on my list last year. He is an absolute workhorse, and he faces bigger assignments and double-teams on most occasions. With John Calipari's wide-open offense, Patterson should have even more room to operate and more room to get to the glass. Last season, he averaged 9.3 rebounds per game. Patterson is also a good offensive rebounder, having averaged 2.7 offensive boards per game, a number that should go up this season. Remember, Patterson hardly ever left a game for Kentucky in 2008-09. When he is able to get a bit more rest, his numbers could actually go up in fewer minutes played.

### 3. [Cole Aldrich](#), Kansas

The Big Fundamental, Aldrich goes after the ball with both hands and keeps it high. He is not blessed with spectacular athleticism like some others on this list, but he uses his big body well and has a significant mean streak on the floor. Aldrich has been well coached in both high school and college, and he embraces being a big man. In a league full of really good rebounders, Aldrich finished second only to Oklahoma's [Blake Griffin](#) in rebounds per game (11.1), offensive rebounds (3.0) and defensive rebounds (8.1) last season. He is both an All-America and player of the year candidate, and one of the best rebounders in any league.

[+] [Enlarge](#)



Joe Murphy/Getty Images

With the return of 7-foot Jerome Jordan, Tulsa is a popular preseason pick to unseat Memphis atop Conference USA.

#### 4. [Jerome Jordan](#), Tulsa

I included Jordan among my top 10 rebounders last season, in large measure because of his potential. He did not disappoint. While still raw and developing -- he has a laid-back personality -- Jordan is very long and is a good athlete and a great kid who aims to please. He works at it and plays much harder than his laid-back persona would suggest. Jordan averaged 9 rebounds per game while facing double-teams and physical defense, but the biggest knock on him is his intensity level. If Jordan continues to improve his game and his level of productivity, perceptions of his personality on the floor will not be an issue.

#### 5. [Derrick Favors](#), Georgia Tech

Sure, he's just a freshman, but Favors is the complete package and will have a major impact in the ACC and nationally. He is an athletic big man who is willing to work his tail off and rebound in a crowd. Favors snatches the ball above the rim, out of his area, and over opponents without surrendering to block-outs. I once saw Favors score 42 points, grab 20 rebounds and block 12 shots in a game during his junior season, and it was about as effortless a performance as I have seen from a high school big man. I have no doubt Favors will live up to the billing he has received. I think he is the best player coming out of high school this season and will post the numbers to back it up.

#### 6. [Michael Washington](#), Arkansas

Washington saw a huge jump in his productivity last season, leading the SEC in rebounding with 9.8 boards per game, with 3.5 of them offensive. He has a nice mix of size and athleticism, and much of his rebounding prowess stems from his aggressiveness. Sometimes you will see bigger players playing cautiously for fear of fouls. Not Washington, who goes after people. He is still a bit raw, but if he continues to work on his skill level, he can be a special player in the SEC this season.

#### 7. [Damion James](#), Texas

James is only 6-7, but he is a big-time rebounder. As a sophomore, James averaged over 10 rebounds per game, including more than three on the offensive end. Last season, he averaged 9.2 rebounds per game, including 2.9 offensive rebounds. He was the fourth-leading rebounder in the Big 12 behind Blake Griffin, Aldrich and Iowa State's [Craig Brackins](#) -- and that was when he was spending a ton of time on the perimeter trying to prove himself as a face-up player. With a little bit more time on the baseline, James can be even more productive on the glass, although 9.2 rebounds per game is incredibly stout. James is tough, has good feet and does not allow himself to be boxed out. He should be an All-American this season.

#### 8. [Kenneth Faried](#), Morehead State

Faried is just a junior but has put up terrific rebounding numbers in his first two seasons at Morehead State. He averaged 8 rebounds as a freshman in just 20 minutes per game, and 13 rebounds as a sophomore. He is just 6-8 and lacks all-around basketball skills, but he plays with great heart and energy and rebounds out of his area. He is quick, is a very good second-jump rebounder (which means he can jump twice as most guys are finishing their first jump), has really good hands and throws his body all over the court to get the ball. Faried is willing to do whatever it takes to get the ball and fills his tank by rebounding, not by scoring. Nobody wants to have to play against that for 40 minutes. Pound for pound, he is among the very best rebounders in the nation.

#### 9. [Larry Sanders](#), VCU

Sanders has incredibly long arms and he is an outstanding shot-blocker who can really run the floor. He is getting stronger and improving his offensive game and is a hard worker and a great kid. With a wingspan of 7-6 and good hands, Sanders has shown the ability to dominate the glass. As he gets more assertive and aggressive and learns to avoid cheap fouls, his numbers will go up. Last season as he started to come into his own, Sanders averaged 8.6 rebounds and just under 3 offensive boards per game. And this kid is only going to get better and better.

[+] [Enlarge](#)



AP Photo/Nick Wass

Height doesn't seem to matter to a bruiser like Marqus Blakely.

#### 10. [Marqus Blakely](#), Vermont

Score one for the smallest guy on this list. With Kenneth Faried, it is "pound for pound." With Blakely, it is "inch for inch." Vermont's star is only 6-5, but he is one of the most efficient and productive players in the nation. Blakely does most of his damage around the basket and is a remarkable athlete but has a nose for the ball like few others. He averaged 11 rebounds per game as a sophomore and more than 9 as a junior, and sets himself apart on the offensive glass. He is quicker than his bigger opponents and stronger than those similarly sized.

*Just missed the cut:*

- [Mac Koshwal](#), DePaul: Outstanding rebounder obscured by a lesser team.
- [Craig Brackins](#), Iowa State: Exceptional all-around player; highly underrated.
- [Mike Davis](#), Illinois: Long and athletic; blossoming into a star.
- [Artsiom Parakhouski](#), Radford: The 6-11 beast from Belarus averaged 11.2 boards a game last season and led his Highlanders to the NCAA tournament.
- [Gani Lawal](#), Georgia Tech: Great size and strength.
- [Trevor Booker](#), Clemson: An absolute bear to play against in the paint.

[NCB](#), [Insider NCB](#), [Notre Dame Fighting Irish](#), [Kentucky Wildcats](#), [Kansas Jayhawks](#), [Georgia Tech Yellow Jackets](#), [Tulsa Golden Hurricane](#), [Arkansas Razorbacks](#), [Texas Longhorns](#), [Morehead State Eagles](#), [Virginia Commonwealth Rams](#), [Vermont Catamounts](#), [DePaul Blue Demons](#), [Iowa State Cyclones](#), [Illinois Fighting Illini](#), [Clemson Tigers](#)