

COLLEGIATE BASEBALL NEWSPAPER NEWS RELEASE

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RICE UNIVERSITY NO. 1 IN COLLEGIATE BASEBALL POLL

TUCSON, Ariz. — Rice University has been ranked No. 1 in *Collegiate Baseball* newspaper's Fabulous 40 NCAA Division I pre-season baseball poll.

The Owls, which finished third at the College World Series last season, return seven position player starters and six remarkable pitchers from a team that rolled to a 57-13 overall record.

The team features four Louisville Slugger pre-season All-Americans in LHP Cole St. Clair (11 SV, 7-2 record, 1.82 ERA, 100 K, 26 BB), LHP/1B Joe Savery (5-1, 2.76 ERA, 62 K, 24 BB, .353 batting avg., 9 HR, 22 2B, 57 RBI, 17 SB), CF Tyler Henley (.336, 8 HR, 26 2B, 54 RBI) and SS Brian Friday (tremendous range on defense, .353, 9 HR, 22 2B, 57 RBI, 17 SB).

Another superb player who returns is Louisville Slugger Freshman All-American LF/2B Aaron Luna. He set the all-time freshman home run record with 16 last season. Luna hit more homers during his freshman season than Houston Astros' All-Star Lance Berkman did when he played for the Owls. Berkman is the career home run record holder at Rice with 67 from 1995-1997.

Also, consider Rice was ranked No. 1 nationally in total number of doubles hit (162), strikeouts per nine innings by their pitching staff (9.5 per game with 653 in 618.7 innings) and finished with the top won-loss record in the nation last season at 57-13 (.814 winning percentage). Rice also finished fourth in the nation with a team ERA of 3.16.

And if that wasn't enough to convince you that Rice is loaded, keep in mind the Owls were ranked No. 1 five straight weeks heading into the College World Series last season and captured 37 of their last 40 games prior to finishing third in the nation.

Rice has qualified for the College World Series five times under coach Wayne Graham and won it all in 2003.

POLL NOTES: Oregon St., which won the College World Series for the first time in school history last year with a 50-16 overall record, was not ranked in the top 40 pre-season poll. The Beavers, which would have been ranked 41st, suffered heavy losses as seven starting position players left along with the team's top three pitchers. Key losses include RHP Dallas Buck (13-3), RHP Jonah Nickerson (13-4), LHP closer Kevin Gunderson (20 SV), LF Cole Gillespie (Pac-10 Player of The Year), CF Tyler Graham, and 3B Shea McFeely, among others.

The *Collegiate Baseball* Newspaper poll is the oldest college baseball poll. Its birth took place during the 1957 college baseball season.

Collegiate Baseball Newspaper's NCAA Div. I Pre-Season Poll (As of Dec. 22, 2006)

Rank School ('06 Final Record)	Points	Final '06 Rank
1. Rice (57-13)	497	3
2. Clemson (53-16)	492	5
3. South Carolina (41-25)	490	12
4. Arkansas (39-21)	488	25
5. North Carolina (54-15)	487	2
6. Miami, Fla. (42-24)	483	6
7. Texas (41-21)	482	17

8. Vanderbilt (38-27)	479	-
9. Nebraska (42-17)	477	22
10. Virginia (47-15)	474	20
11. Georgia Tech. (50-18)	472	8
12. Cal. St. Fullerton (50-15)	469	4
13. Florida St. (42-21)	467	24
14. Arizona St. (37-21)	464	-
15. Texas Christian (39-23)	462	-
16. Tulane (43-21)	459	27
17. Wichita St. (46-22)	456	-
18. Tennessee (31-24)	453	-
19. Pepperdine (42-21)	450	30
20. Mississippi (44-22)	448	11
21. Baylor (37-26)	447	26
22. Georgia (47-23)	444	7
23. Stanford (33-27)	441	15
24. Oklahoma St. (41-20)	438	23
25. Southern California (25-33)	435	-
26. UCLA (33-25)	433	-
27. Arizona (27-28)	431	-
28. Evansville (43-22)	429	19
29. Oral Roberts (41-16)	426	14
30. Long Beach St. (29-27)	424	-
31. Louisiana St. (35-24)	421	-
32. Mississippi St. (37-23)	420	-
33. Houston (39-22)	417	21
34. Oklahoma (45-22)	414	10
35. Troy (47-16)	412	-
36. San Francisco (39-23)	409	-
37. Winthrop (46-18)	407	-
38. Michigan (43-21)	406	-
39. Notre Dame (45-17-1)	403	-
40. Ohio St. (37-21)	401	-

Other Teams Receiving Votes: Oregon St., Kentucky, Florida, Alabama, Auburn, Hawaii, McNeese St., Missouri St., Jacksonville, Maine, North Carolina St., Wake Forest, U.C. Irvine, Fresno St., San Jose St., Texas Tech, Texas A&M, Missouri, San Diego, Loyola Marymount, Santa Clara, Florida Atlantic, Louisiana-Lafayette, South Alabama, Stetson, North Florida, Washington, Washington St., California, Western Carolina, College of Charleston, Rhode Island, Louisville, Minnesota, Cal. Poly-SLO, U.C. Riverside, Old Dominion, Southern Mississippi, East Carolina, Memphis, Central Michigan, Kent St., Ball St., Creighton, San Diego St., Samford, Army.

***This release can be viewed on *Collegiate Baseball* newspaper's web site: www.baseballnews.com

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