

**FOR RELEASE**  
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## *Jacksonville picked to win 2011 Pioneer Football League race*

ST. LOUIS – Jacksonville University, which shared the 2010 Pioneer Football League championship, has been tapped as the 2011 preseason favorite in the league’s preseason coaches’ poll, receiving eight of 10 first-place votes.

Jacksonville received 80 of a possible 81 points as coaches were not allowed to vote for their own team in the poll. Dayton, which also earned a share of the 2010 PFL championship, was picked second with 69 points and one first-place vote. The Dolphins and Flyers each finished 2010 with unblemished 8-0 marks but did not face each other during the regular season. However, the two teams will meet in 2011 – an Oct. 8 contest in Jacksonville will be their first meeting since 2008.

Drake was picked to finish third with 61 points and nabbed the remaining first-place vote. San Diego was picked to finish fourth with 59 points and Butler rounded out the top half of the preseason poll with 47 points for fifth place.

The PFL preseason poll was rounded out by Morehead State (38 points), Campbell (33), Marist (31), Davidson (23) and Valparaiso (nine).

Jacksonville claimed a share of its second PFL title with an unblemished 8-0 mark last season. Head coach Kerwin Bell, in his fifth season with the Dolphins, returns 14 starters from last season’s team, including senior quarterback Josh McGregor. McGregor, who was a second-team All-PFL selection last season was named to The Sports Network’s Walter Payton Award Watch List in July after leading the FCS in passing efficiency last season with a 169.54 rating. Also returning is McGregor’s top target last season, senior wideout Josh Philpart – a unanimous first-team All-PFL selection last season – who enters the 2011 campaign as the Dolphins career leader in receiving yards (2,156) and touchdown receptions (29).

Dayton clinched a share of its second-straight and 11th overall PFL title after posting an 8-0 record last season. Fourth-year head coach Rick Chamberlin will have to fill plenty of holes on the offensive side of the ball where the Flyers return just four starters from last season’s squad. Dayton lost quarterback Steve Valentino, a two-time PFL “Offensive Player of the Year,” as well as wide receiver Justin Watkins its leading receiver. However, Dayton’s defense promises to be as strong as ever, returning six starters from a unit that was the league’s toughest against the run (78.4 ypg) and ranked third in total defense (324.1 ypg). Senior defensive end Devon Langhorst, a first-team All-PFL selection last season, led the Flyers defense and ranked second nationally in sacks (14.0).

Drake has finished third in the PFL race each of the past two seasons, posting consecutive 6-2 marks. The Bulldogs faced both of the league’s co-champions on the road in 2011, losing by five points at Jacksonville and six points at Dayton. Fourth-year head coach Chris Creighton returns an impressive 17 starters from last season’s team, including 10 offensive starters. The offensive unit, led by senior quarterback Mike Piatkowski, was middle of the pack in most offensive yardage categories but was third in scoring (26.3 ppg). The Bulldogs defense enjoyed an impressive campaign and finished as the league’s second stingiest defensive unit, allowing just 20.5 points per game. Senior linebacker Tyler Moorehead, a first-team All-PFL honoree and the team’s leading tackler (62), returns this season as does senior cornerback Michael Lahart who ranked third among Drake tacklers.

San Diego, under fifth-year head coach Ron Caragher, quickly bounced back from its first losing PFL mark this millennium (3-5 in 2009) to post a 5-3 mark in 2010 and finish fourth. The Toreros return 12 starters from that squad, including six defensive starters. San Diego’s preseason story line has centered on senior defensive lineman Mario Kurn, a unanimous first-team All-PFL selection last season who has been named to three preseason FCS All-America squads. Kurn led the FCS with 17 quarterback sacks last season, part of a league-leading 27.0 tackles for loss. Offensively, junior

<b>Pioneer Football League 2011 Preseason Coaches’ Poll</b>		
<i>Team</i>		<i>Points</i>
1.	Jacksonville (8)	80
2.	Dayton (1)	69
3.	Drake (1)	61
4.	San Diego	59
5.	Butler	47
6.	Morehead State	38
7.	Campbell	33
8.	Marist	31
9.	Davidson	23
10.	Valparaiso	9
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• First-place votes in parentheses.</li> <li>• Nine points awarded for a first-place vote, with one point less for each succeeding place.</li> <li>• Coaches were not allowed to vote for their own team.</li> </ul>		

quarterback Mason Mills returns after ranking second in pass efficiency (144.8 rating) and fifth among the league's quarterbacks in passing yardage (196.4 ypg).

Butler rounds out the top half of the league's preseason poll after suffering through a disappointing 2010 campaign that saw them finish seventh in the league race one year after winning a share of the 2009 PFL crown. Head coach Jeff Voris, in his sixth season at Butler, returns 13 starters from last season's squad. He will seek to improve the scoring threat of an offensive unit that ranked third in total offense (380.5 ypg) last season but could not convert that yardage into points, finishing eighth among the league's offenses in scoring (18.4 ppg). Senior quarterback Andrew Huck returns as do senior wideouts Jordan Koopman and Zach Watkins to lead the offensive effort. On the defensive side of the ball, junior linebacker Jordan Ridley, the team's lone first-team All-PFL selection last season, returns to anchor a unit that led the PFL in scoring defense (19.2 ppg), total defense (304.5 ypg) and passing defense (160.7 ypg).

Morehead State begins the second half of the league poll after a surprising 2010 campaign. The Eagles were picked to finish ninth in the preseason poll last season but posted a 4-4 league mark and finished fifth. Head coach Matt Ballard enters his 18th season at the helm and returns a wealth of experience with 16 starters slated to return in 2011. Junior quarterback Zach Lewis returns to lead the Morehead State offense after finishing second among league signal-callers in passing yardage (263.5 ypg). Defensively, senior linebacker Tony Bachman returns after finishing second among the league's tacklers (11.1 tpg). In addition, junior kicker Rainer Duzan returns after earning the team's only first-team All-PFL honor last season.

Campbell begins the fourth season of its gridiron return with 16 starters back from a squad that finished tied for seventh with a 2-6 PFL mark. Head coach Dale Steele will have to find a replacement for quarterback Daniel Polk, who led the league's quarterbacks with 12 rushing touchdowns. However, he still returns the bulk of the league's top rushing offense which averaged 207.7 yards per game. Senior running backs Rashaun Brown (74.8 ypg) and Carl Smith (45.6 ypg) ranked second and sixth among league rushers in 2010.

Marist also finished among the league's three-way tie for seventh with a 2-6 PFL mark last season. Head coach Jim Parady begins his 20th season with the Red Foxes and will see 12 starters return from last season's team, including eight offensive starters. Senior quarterback Tommy Reilly made a mark last season, setting the Marist single-season record for passing yardage (2,383 yards) and ranked third among PFL quarterbacks in yardage average (216.6 ypg) and pass efficiency (136.5 ypg).

Davidson returns 15 starters from last season's squad that finished sixth in the regular-season race. Seventh-year head coach Tripp Merritt saw his team make a transition early in the season as sophomore quarterback Jonathan Carkhuff took the reins in Week 3 and become the first true freshman to lead Davidson since 2004. He was named the PFL's Freshman Offensive Player of the Year after throwing for 2,002 yards on 197 completions. Davidson's defense returns eight starters from last season, including senior linebacker Patrick Moynahan who led the team with 70 tackles last season.

Valparaiso begins the second season of the Dale Carlson era with 12 starters and 42 letterwinners returning from last season's squad. The Crusaders used five different quarterbacks during the 2010 campaign and that position will be a question mark this season after quarterback Nate Goergen did not return. Valparaiso's secret weapon resides in the foot of junior punter Greg Wood who returns after setting a PFL record with 43.6 yards per punt last season and earning unanimous first-team All-PFL honors.

The 2011 PFL schedule will again feature each team playing an eight-game slate. This is the third year of the current scheduling format meaning the off-schedule team rotates this season. New matchups on the conference slate this season are Butler-Marist, Campbell-San Diego, Davidson-Valparaiso, Dayton-Jacksonville and Drake-Morehead State.

Two PFL squads will kickoff the 2011 campaign, Thursday, Sept. 1, with Morehead State hosting Kentucky Christian while Drake visits North Dakota. The remaining eight teams begin the campaign, Saturday, Sept. 3. Marist and Dayton will meet in the first league outing during Week 3, but the league slate will begin in earnest Oct. 1 with the first of seven consecutive weeks featuring PFL only action.

**-PFL-**