

WBCA Preseason Coaches Poll 2026

Division 2

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Last season's state champs were unranked at the outset of the season, but they won't catch anyone by surprise in 2026. The Lions and Wisconsin Lutheran will likely tangle for the top spot in the Woodland West. Regardless of where that battle ends, you can bet Eisenhower will have

a presence in the postseason, led by a quintet of seniors in Caleb Johns, Mason Jones, Josh Bonin, Collin Harrington and Charlie Wait who make up a large chunk of the 70-plus percent of at bats and innings on the mound to make another run at a gold ball.



A favorite in the Woodland East, the Falcons shared last year's title with Greenfield and added a Regional Title plaque to the wall in 2025. The cupboard is certainly not bare for Coach Fischer, as they return Tanner Effertz, Luke Parkinson and Alex Meyer as a strong core for a team seeking a playoff run that includes a stop in Appleton.



The 2025 division three state champs bump up a division as a result of the state's performance factor. The Lancers are the pick to win the Metro Classic and they will also likely have a say in who takes home hardware in Appleton. LSU commit and Prep Baseball Report

number one ranked Dominic Santarelli gets the headlines, but teammates Zach Rizzo (UW-Parkside) and Patrick Davidson will also be key factors if the Lancers again end up at state. It would be the program's fifth trip in the past six years.



The Thunder were oh-so-close to a gold ball in 2025, and they look primed for a return trip. They are the favorite to repeat as Bay Conference champs after losing only once in 18 conference games last season. No one should be surprised if they end up bagging more hardware

this season, as Coach Jefson welcomes back twin brothers Carson and Cayden Staffeldt along with Xavier Salzman. It is a group that has done a lot of winning in their baseball careers, and it would perhaps be topped only with a gold ball for the trophy case in 2026.



The Beavers were the Badger Small champs and look equally imposing this season after finishing as one of the last four standing in 2025. A third straight championship in the Small will be well-earned, and that grind

last spring played a big role in navigating to state for only the second time since 1973. Winston Alonso and Luke Verch return to lead Coach Hahn's group in search of a second straight trip to Appleton.



The Chargers are one of the favorites in the newly-formed Glacier Trails Conference. Veteran head coach Darrell Washburn has Brett Biondich and Blake Hagenow back to lead the charge in 2026. Washburn's squads have been dominant over the last

five seasons, winning or sharing the East Central Conference title in each of those seasons, averaging 22 wins including a trip to Appleton in 2024. A shot at state-level hardware is definitely on their radar this spring.



The Spartans are expected to be one of the contenders for the Northeastern Conference title, and they may also have added incentive after an early post season exit in 2025. Coach Routhieux's squad was upset by 12-seed Waupaca in the

opening round, but return over three-quarters of their innings and at bats, led by senior Gavin Lax and Cincinnati-commit, junior Jacob Coisman to write a different story in 2026.

8



The Indians are again consistently contending for conference titles, and 2025 looks like more of the same in the new Glacier Trails Conference. Kewaskum will have to

get through Kettle Moraine Lutheran for a conference title, but conference coaches think the Indians may be best equipped to do so. They bring back Liam Stoffel and top-15 Prep Baseball Report junior Kingston Grisolono to lead the charge.

15



The Trojans were the Rock Valley-Rock champs in 2025, but were left on the doorstep of the state tournament. Coach Jeff Clowes squad is again

picked to win the conference as they also aim for what would be only their third trip to Appleton since 2000. Carston Jacobson and Sawyer Wightman return to lead the way.

9



The Blugolds remain in division two due to the state performance factor. It has not deterred their seeming annual place at the table in Appleton, where they finished for the third

straight season. Coach Mike Dee's squad shared the Mississippi Valley conference title, are the favorite to win it again this season and will be led by two-way stalwart Waylon Hargrove and junior Jonny Deets.

16



The Great Northern champs expect to again contend for a conference title, but the challenges may come from more than one place. The Indians held off Medford and

late-charging Rhinelander and reached the Sectional Final before falling to Aquinas. They return All-Conference picks Treve Stoffel, Kaden Kolodziej and Carter Fandrey to lead their 2026 campaign.

10



A favorite for the top spot in the Middle Border, the Spartans return over 60 percent of their innings and at bats from 2025. A conference title will likely require them to

get through D-3 Prescott, who won the conference outright last season. If the Spartans have a special season, UW-Milwaukee recruit Mason Schmidt will likely have a big hand in it.

17



The co-champs of the Flyway had their season end ahead of the regional final, and their aim in 2026 is beyond that date. The Cougars welcome back over half of their innings

pitched and at bats, led by All-Conference picks Jace Goebel, Kyler Bowe and Trent Schladweiler to take another run at a conference title.

11



The Warriors got displaced again, but they continue to contend for conference titles and return trips to Appleton. A newcomer to the Capital North, Waupun finished behind two other preseason top-10s on this list (Kettle Moraine Lutheran and Kewaskum) in the disbanded ECC, but were voted immediate favorites to win the conference this spring.

18



The 2024 state champs finished one game back of Badger Small champ Reedsburg in 2025 only to get upset in the opening round of the playoffs. Despite graduation losses, coach Richard Newton's Crusaders bring enough back to be a conference title threat as picked by conference coaches, led by Jack and Liam Bishop, both who played on that 2024 state title-winning team.

12



A young Eagles squad in 2025 managed to win another conference title but had their season end without a post season win. Conference Player of the Year Bentley Wagner and Pitcher of the Year Braxton Thiede have the Eagles again as Rock Valley-Valley conference title favorites with eyes on playing through the middle of June.

19



The Red Hawks were the Coulee Conference runner-up last season, and have their sights set higher in 2026. The likes of perennial contenders Westby and Viroqua

will make their path to a conference title a challenge, but over half of their innings and at bats return, led by 1st Team, All-Conference picks Caiden Brady and Nathan Holthaus.

13



The Hodags got hot late in 2025 with a young nucleus, and all of those key pieces are back to contend for a GNC title this spring. That streak included wins Medford and Mosinee. Junior Connor Rappley authored a perfect game and won his last four starts. Classmates Sawyer Bishop and Abe Gretzinger are part of a talented Hodag class of 2027.

20



The Northeastern Conference runner-up Mustangs got within two wins of what would have been their second-ever trip to the state tournament in 2025. Returning All-Conference picks Noah Faccio and Reece Joten have eyes on contending for a conference title and having at least one game to play in mid-June.

14



The South Central Conference champs bring back nearly every piece of their 19-win team that ended prematurely in the regional semifinals. The Chiefs intend to run it back again with better results, led by Cooper Whitehurst, Carter Syverson and junior Nolan Schmitz and will not have to face the gauntlet of Badger Small teams in 2026, having been moved to Group B in the Altoona Sectional.

21



The Capitol North champs also put a Regional Title plaque on the wall before falling to number five Reedsburg in the sectional semifinals in 2025. Despite

graduating 13 seniors from that team, new head coach Dan Pavlue welcomes back three key pitchers, led by Kale Schneider along with Reece Schreiber and Ace Hoffman. They will now have to contend with newly-added and 11th-ranked Waupun for conference supremacy.

