

COLLEGE BASKETBALL PREVIEW: IDAHO MEN

For once, a UI team built on continuity



> COACH
Don Verlin, fifth year, 69-60

> 2011-12
19-14 overall, 9-5 WAC

The Vandals are optimistic: Make no mistake about that. But their optimism is based on something highly unusual for the University of Idaho men's basketball program: a degree of continuity. With stability-minded **DON VERLIN** heading into his fifth year as coach, the roster includes six scholarship or preferred walk-on players who signed with the Vandals out of high school, as opposed to a junior college, and as many as three of them might crack the starting lineup. That's well-nigh spectacular for this school. It's also a little hazy. Can that sort of experience offset, for example, the loss of three starters from

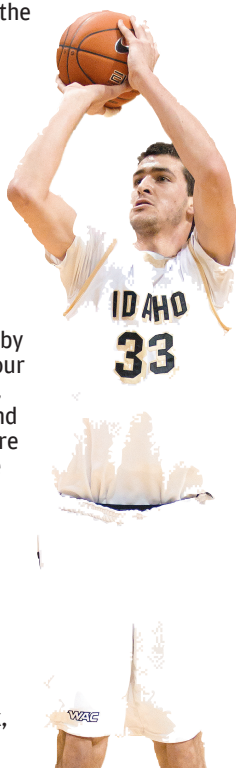
last year's 19-14 team? That's just one of several questions in the air.

The new WAC

Like many teams around the country, the Vandals will spend part of this season getting acquainted with new opponents and new travel itineraries. Leaving the WAC this year are Nevada, Fresno State and Hawaii, replaced by an influx of five teams, including four highly unfamiliar to Idaho: Denver, UT Arlington, Texas San Antonio and Texas State. The Vandals know more about the other newcomer, Seattle University.

All-American roster

For the first time in several years, every member of the Vandals hails from the United States. The roster includes three players each from Idaho and Washington, six from California, two from Oregon, and one each from New York, Texas and Nebraska.



The Barone factor

The most obvious UI questions at the moment concern **KYLE BARONE** (pictured), the preseason All-Western Athletic Conference post who two weeks ago was issued a DUI in Pullman. He seems to be satisfying the demands of Verlin's indefinite suspension, but it's not clear when he will be cleared for competition or how the whole episode will affect his performance and the stability this team is hanging its hat upon. When he does return, in any case, Barone is the centerpiece of this team. He's one of the half-dozen Vandals who signed with the school out of high school, along with **STEPHEN MADISON**, **CONNOR HILL**, **MATT BORTON**, **JOE KAMMERER** and **TY EGBERT**.

Who's at the point?

The Vandals this year lose the two players who combined to log virtually every point-guard minute on the team last season: Landon Tatum (the starter for most of last year) and Deremy Geiger (who generally manned the point in 2010-11). And two weeks into preseason workouts, it's not clear who Tatum's successor will be. The candidates are senior **MIKE MCCHRISTIAN** and junior-college transfers **ROBERT HARRIS** and **DENZEL DOUGLAS**.

> SCHEDULE

(All times Pacific; home games in caps; Western Athletic Conference games notated by *)

DATE	OPPONENT	TIME
10/27	SEATTLE PACIFIC (exh.)	7:05p
11/2	CENTRAL WASH. (exh.)	8:05p
11/9	WRIGHT ST.	7:05p
11/17	MONTANA	7:05p
11/20	GREEN BAY	7:05p
11/23	New Mexico	7:30p
11/28	Washington St.	7p
12/1	UC DAVIS	7:05p
12/6	Eastern Wash.	6p
12/8	Texas El Paso	6p
12/15	WALLA WALLA U.	7:05p
12/20	Boise St.	TBA
12/29	Seattle *	5p
1/3	San Jose St. *	7p
1/5	Utah St. *	7p
1/10	DENVER *	7:05p
1/12	NEW MEXICO ST. *	7:05p
1/17	Louisiana Tech *	5p
1/19	UT Arlington *	5p
1/24	TEXAS ST. *	7:05p
1/26	TEXAS SAN ANTONIO *	7:05p
1/31	UTAH ST. *	7:05p
2/2	SAN JOSE ST. *	7:05p
2/7	New Mexico St. *	6p
2/9	Denver *	3p
2/14	UT ARLINGTON *	7:05p
2/16	LOUISIANA TECH *	7:05p
2/23	BracketBuster	TBA
2/28	Texas San Antonio *	5p
3/2	Texas St. *	noon
3/9	SEATTLE *	7:05p
3/13-3/16	WAC tournament #	TBA

At Las Vegas

> RETURNING LEADERS

POINTS PER GAME

Kyle BARONE 12.9

REBOUNDS PER GAME

Kyle BARONE 8.0

ASSISTS PER GAME

Stephen MADISON 2.1

> ROSTER

NO.	PLAYER	POS	HT	YR
0	Robert Harris Jr.	G	5-10	Jr.
1	Denzel Douglas	G	5-10	Jr.
3	Mansa Habeeb	G	6-3	Sr.
4	Mac Stannard	G	6-2	Jr.
5	Connor Hill	G	6-2	So.
11	Westin Hill	G	5-11	So.
12	Mike McChristian	G	6-2	Sr.
15	Max Salesky	G	6-2	Fr.
20	Matt Borton	G	6-5	So.
21	Antwan Scott	G	6-1	Jr.
24	Marcus Bell	F	6-8	Jr.
32	Allen Jiles IV	G	6-2	Jr.
33	Kyle Barone	C	6-10	Sr.
34	Stephen Madison	F	6-5	Jr.
41	Ty Egbert	F	6-8	Fr.
42	Joe Kammerer	C	6-9	Jr.
45	Wendell Faines	F	6-8	Sr.