

BIG EAST

BY CORY MCCARTNEY

HOW THEY'LL FINISH

	CONFERENCE		OVERALL	
	W-L	PCT.	W-L	PCT.
ATLANTIC				
West Virginia	6-1	.857	10-2	.833
Pitt	6-1	.857	9-3	.750
South Florida	6-1	.857	9-3	.750
Syracuse	3-4	.429	7-5	.583
Cincinnati	3-4	.429	6-6	.500
Connecticut	2-5	.286	6-6	.500
Louisville	1-6	.143	4-8	.333
Rutgers	1-6	.143	4-8	.333

Notables

Best offensive player

GENO SMITH QB, West Virginia, Junior

He threw for 2,763 yards and 24 TDs in his first year as a starter. Those numbers could explode in new coach Dana Holgorsen's Air Raid offense.

True freshman to watch

SAVON HUGGINS RB, Rutgers

The Knights' first No. 1-rated in-state product—he went to St. Peter's Prep in Jersey City—should bolster a ground game that ranked 110th nationally.

Coach on the rise

DOUG MARRONE Syracuse

The former Orange O-lineman took over a program that lost 43 games in five years and in just his second season led it to its first bowl since '04.

Coach on the hot seat

GREG SCHIANO Rutgers

He helped put Rutgers on the map but has yet to deliver a title in 10 seasons in Piscataway—and he's coming off his first eight-loss season since '02.

Best defensive player

BRANDON LINDSEY

DE-LB, Pitt, Senior

The 6' 2" 250-pounder had 10 sacks a year ago and will play a hybrid position called the Panther linebacker in a new-look 3-4.



Players to Watch (Top performers from unranked teams)

KENDALL REYES DT, UConn, Senior

The 6' 4" 298-pounder thought about leaving for the NFL after racking up 39 tackles, including 10 for a loss, last season, but—to the delight of Huskies fans and the dismay of opposing linemen—he elected to return.

ZACH COLLAROS QB, Cincinnati, Senior

The All-Big East QB—a unanimous selection—led the conference with 2,902 yards and 26 TDs in 2010. But can he cut down on the 14 picks he threw in his first season as a starter?

RYAN MASSIB QB, Syracuse, Senior

The stage for a potential breakout year was set with a 239-yard, three-touchdown performance in the Pinstripe Bowl, a 36-34 win over Kansas State. He'll have to carry more of a load without a proven running back.

LINDSEY LAMAR KR-WR, South Florida, Junior

The league's special teams player of the year returned two kicks for TDs in '10. He's undersized for a receiver at 5' 8", but few can match the speed that made him an all-conference sprinter in two events.

RAY GRAHAM RB, Pitt, Junior

Despite splitting carries, he rushed for 922 yards and eight TDs, including a 277-yard game against Florida International. A dangerous pass catcher, he'll get plenty of touches in and out of the backfield.

Extra Points

Job turnover was an all-too-common theme, with three new coaches taking over: Pitt's **Todd Graham**, West Virginia's **Dana Holgorsen** and UConn's **Paul Pasqualoni**. Only two coaches have been at their schools for longer than two years: Syracuse's **Doug Marrone** and Rutgers's **Greg Schiano**. ... The Mountaineers' **Bruce Irvin** ranked second in the FBS in sacks last year, with 14. The scary part? The former juco All-America arrived in Morgantown so late he was used only in obvious passing situations. The defensive staff's challenge this off-season was turning him into an every-down end. ... The Huskies have a viral video star in their midst. Walk-on QB **Johnny McEntee** has drawn nearly six million YouTube hits with his *Johnny Mac Trick Shot Quarterback*, in which his array of throws includes hitting the sign off a passing pizza truck. ... Only one 1,000-yard rusher from last year returns—Cincinnati's **Isaiah Pead**—though Louisville's **Victor Anderson** gained 1,047 yards in 2008 before being slowed by injuries. ... South Florida hopes **Darrell Scott** will give its ground game a lift. The top-rated rusher in the class of '08, Scott signed with Colorado but transferred after two lackluster seasons.