

### Bronco Football Picked to Finish Third in MAC West

**DETROIT, Mich.** – The Western Michigan football team was selected to finish third in the West Division, according to the 2018 Mid-American Conference Football Media Preseason Poll. The poll was announced at the league's annual MAC Football Media Day at Ford Field in Detroit and was determined by the league's media members.

Ohio was voted to win the East Division with 140 points, as well as win the 2018 Marathon MAC Football Championship Game. Northern Illinois was picked to win the MAC West with 133 points.

Following the Huskies in the West was Toledo with 125 points and Western Michigan with 87 points. Eastern Michigan came in fourth with 67 points, followed by Central Michigan and Ball State. In the East, Buffalo finished second with 112 points, followed by Miami in third with 95 points and Akron in fourth with 74 points. Rounding out the East was Bowling Green and Kent State.

The preseason poll reflects on the competitive nature of the MAC. In the last three years, six different MAC programs have competed in the Marathon MAC Football Championship Game and every football program has received an invitation to a bowl game during the last six years (2012-17).

After starting the year 4-2 in 2017, Western Michigan was hit hard by the injury bug and finished the season 2-4 for a 6-6 overall, 4-4 MAC record. The Broncos had 22 season-ending injuries, among those starting quarterback Jon Wassink, three of their top four running backs (Jamauri Bogan, LeVante Bellamy, Davon Tucker), starting wide receivers Keishawn Watson and Giovanni Ricci and five members of the Bronco secondary unit. With a healthy squad this season and plenty of younger players that received extended playing time last year, WMU will attempt to capture its third West Division crown in the last four years and its second MAC Championship in the last three years.

Western Michigan opens the 2018 season hosting Syracuse at home on Friday, Aug. 31 at 6 p.m. The Broncos travel to Michigan in week two (Sept. 8) and return home to host Delaware State Saturday, Sept. 15, for the Broncos' annual CommUniverCity game (7 p.m. kickoff). WMU begins its MAC schedule Saturday, Sept. 29, at Miami University. The Broncos' first home conference game is against Eastern Michigan, Saturday, Oct. 6 (Noon kickoff), which will also be WMU's 95th annual homecoming game, as well as Youth Day.

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