When it comes to winning the Frontier Conference men's basketball championship, it's been tough to pinpoint an exact formula.

After all, the league has seen many different teams capture the crown over the last decade, including Westminster College, Lewis-Clark State, Carroll College, Montana State University-Northern, UM-Western and Rocky Mountain College.

So it's safe to say no one team has simply dominated the Frontier in recent history.

It's also safe to say though, the Frontier is deep, and that means a number of teams will always be in the thick of the conference chase. That was no more evident than last season when the regular season champion, Lewis-Clark State, had four losses at season's end, while the fifth-place team, Rocky Mountain College, went on to win the postseason Frontier title.

The Frontier's depth was also evident last season in that, four teams made it to the NAIA national tournament, making the league one of the most tightly contested in the country.

This winter should be no different. Seven teams enter conference play with a winning record, meaning there will again be plenty of parity.

And that also means the race to the league championship, and the postseason tournament, will be cloudy and confusing right up until the end of February.

But parity also means excitement, and it looks as though the Frontier will be as exciting as it's ever been over the next three months.

Here's a look at the 2013 Frontier Conference in men's basketball, in its predicted order of finish

**UM-Western Bulldogs**

**2013-14:** 7-5, 0-1  
**2012-13:** 24-10, 11-5 (2nd, At-Large NAIA Berth)  
**Head Coach:** Steve Keller

Key Returnees: Jake Owsley (6-8, Sr.), Maazin Butler (5-11, Sr.), Kris Castro (6-4, Jr.), Gabe Rucker (6-2, Sr.).  
**Outlook:** The Bulldogs, along with MSU-Northern have been the two most consistent programs in the Frontier over the last six seasons, and that won’t change this winter. Western has depth at the guard position and one of the best bigs in the league in Jake Owsley. UM-W also has the experience of winning an NAIA national tournament game in two of the last three seasons, and they’ve gone to Kansas City three straight years. Western has also played for the Frontier title or reached the semifinals in the last five seasons, and the Bulldogs have the team to go that far again. Nearly unbeatable at home, if Western even splits its road games this season, the Bulldogs will be at or near the top of the Frontier yet again.
Rocky Mountain College Bears
2013-14: 10-3, 1-0, No. 10
2012-13: 21-13, 9-7 (5th, Frontier Tourney Champ)
Head Coach: Bill Dreikosen

Key Returnees: Jeremy Nicholas (6-6, Sr.), Joel Barndt (6-9, Sr.), Malachi Roberts (6-4, Jr.). Outlook: The Battlin’ Bears didn’t set the world on fire last winter, but they sure did in March. RMC won three straight Frontier Conference games, capturing the league’s NAIA automatic berth. The Bears lost in the first round of the last year's national tourney, but the run last March seemed to catapult Rocky into not only a legitimate Frontier title threat this season, but a team that could make a deep run in the national tourney, just as it did in 2009. The return of star swingman Jeremy Nicholas and fellow senior Joel Barndt, as well as the addition of scoring machine Tyree Anderson makes RMC one of the most athletic and dangerous offensive teams in the Frontier. If RMC defends as well as it scores the ball, the sky is the limit this season.

MSU-Northern Lights
2013-14: 12-2, 1-0, No. 16
2012-13: 23-10, 10-6 (3rd, At-Large NAIA Berth)
Head Coach: Shawn Huse

Key Returnees: Roshawn West (6-1, Sr.), Corbin Pearson (6-6, Jr.), Alfie Miller (6-0, Sr.), Jesse Vaughan (6-5, Jr.). Outlook: The Lights have had as much success as anybody in the Frontier in the last decade. Seven straight 20-win seasons, back-to-back regular season titles in 2011-12, four trips to Kansas City in the last five years, and they haven't finished lower than third in the league standings in the last five seasons. This season, Northern is deep, returning four starters and most of its bench from last year's squad. The addition of newcomers Nicholas Blount, Gabe Finley and Damian Robinson give MSU-N one of the deepest team's in the league, and with how well the Lights play defense, and play at home, a run at a Frontier title and yet another trip to K.C. seems likely.

Lewis-Clark State Warriors
2013-14: 11-3, 1-1
2012-13: 11-4, 28-6 (1st, At-Large NAIA Berth)
Head Coach: Brandon Rinta

Key Returnees: Jacob Champoux (6-0, Sr.), Robert Ellis (6-2, Sr.), Trey Sobotta (6-0, So.). Outlook: It didn’t take long for Brandon Rinta to get the Warriors on track. In just his second season at the helm, LCSC won the Frontier regular season title and reached the NAIA national tourney. Now, the Warriors return three of their top five scorers from last season, and have added a host of newcomers, including star guard E.J. Ferris, a transfer from Utah State, who's averaging 22 points per game so far this season. LCSC is guard heavy, but if the Warriors can defend the post, and find a way to win away from Lewiston, they'll be a force in the Frontier again this winter.

Westminster College Griffins
2013-14: 7-6, 1-0
2012-13: 22-8, 9-6 (4th)
Head Coach: Adam Hiatt

Key Returnees: Tallon Robertson (6-6, Sr.), Blake Skidmore (6-0, Sr.), Jordan Pryor (6-2, So.), Adam Rainbird (6-5, Sr.). Outlook: The Griffins have long been the premier team in the Frontier, but the last few seasons, they've fell short. Westminster once again has a deep and talented lineup, one which includes eight of its top nine scorers from last season. With a strong tradition of winning at home, and a system which is very tough to defend, there's no reason why Westminster can't overcome a start in non-conference play and contend for a league title this season.

University of Great Falls Argos
2013-14: 10-4, 1-0
2012-13: 17-14, 8-8 (6th)
Head Coach: Steve Silsby

Key Returnees: Marcel Towns (6-2, Sr.), T.J. Harris (5-8, Jr.), Naren Maynerd (6-6, Sr.). Outlook: The Argos have been on the verge of competing for a Frontier title, and more, for several years now. But they
tend to dip in February, and it's cost them the last few years. UGF is off to a great start again this season, the Argos have the most dynamic player in the league in 2013 Frontier Player of the Year Marcel Towns, and the addition of standouts like Shawn Williams and Marcus Hurn give them more depth. If UGF can win key games in February, the Argos certainly won't be finishing sixth in the league this season, and they could finally get over the hump they've been so close to climbing in recent years.

Montana Tech
2013-14: 7-5, 0-1
2012-13: 15-15, 6-10 (7th)
**Head Coach:** Patrick O'Herron

Key Returnees: Adam Greger (6-6, Jr.), Bryan Bock (6-3, Sr.), Brandon Rydberg (6-3, Jr.). Outlook: The Orediggers are in a true rebuilding mold. It starts with new head coach Patrick O'Herron, a man familiar with the program. O'Herron has revamped the Tech roster, building around two-time All-Conference forward Adam Greger, one of the best players in the league. New additions like Travis Peevey and Antonio Snow will bolster a lineup that returned just two starters, and should give Tech the necessary depth to be a possible dark horse in the Frontier this season.

Carroll College Fighting Saints
2013-14: 5-8, 0-1
2012-13: 2-25, 1-15 (9th)
**Head Coach:** Carson Cunningham

Key Returnees: Chris McGrath (6-0, Sr.), Nick Jones (6-5, Sr.), Dennis Mikelonis (6-5, Sr.). Outlook: The Saints are coming off the most miserable season in school history, finishing dead last in the Frontier and winning just two games all of last season. Former Purdue star Carson Cunningham was hired to fix things, and Carroll is already in a much better place. The Saints return three starters, but are young, with freshmen Jake Hollifield and Zach Taylor logging heavy minutes so far. Carroll will be a much tougher team in the league this season, but is still going to need a couple of years to recover from the disaster that was 2012-13.

Dickinson State Blue Hawks
2013-14: 4-7, 0-1
2012-13: 12-18, 5-9
**Head Coach:** Ty Orton

Key Returnees: Ty Ackelson (6-1, Sr.), Robbie Morey (6-2, Sr.). Outlook: It will be two-and-done for the Blue Hawks. After this season, DSU will move to the North Star Athletic Conference. DSU will be a tough out as usual, but the Blue Hawks are molding a fairly new roster, with just two returning full-time starters back. DSU always plays well at home, but a finish near the bottom of the league is again likely.