First it was Lewis-Clark State, now the Westminster Griffins are hogging the Frontier Conference women's championship.

The two teams from outside Montana sure have made life difficult for the original members of the Frontier over the last decade.

But if there is a team that can knock the Griffins, and even the Warriors from their Frontier perch, that team may exist in 2014.

Westminster, winners of the last five Frontier titles, is still the team to beat, and LCSC looks to be right there, too. But, there is balance in the league this season and that should make for a very interesting next three months.

There's also great individual players littered throughout the Frontier, stars the likes of Western's Sammi Bignell and UGF's Erin Legel, while MSU-Northern is playing defense better than any team in all of NAIA basketball right now.

So while Westminster is the best in the Frontier until someone proves otherwise, it looks like things won't be so cut and dried this season, and it looks as though it's going to be a tight race to the Frontier championship.

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

**Westminster College Griffins**

**2013-14:** 7-2, 1-0, No. 4  
**2012-13:** 29-4, 14-1 (Frontier Champions, NAIA Elite 8)  
**Head Coach:** Shelley Jarrard

Key Returnees: Shelby Ellsworth (5-11, So.), Amy Krommenhoek (5-7, Jr.), Tia Pappas (5-7, Jr.), Alli Blake (5-11, Sr.).  
**Outlook:** The Griffins have won five straight Frontier titles, and only seem to be getting better. Despite the loss of Frontier Player of the Year Nicole Yazzie, as well as its starting two post players, including All-American Cydney Tibbitts, Westminster will be tough to knock off this season. The Griffins return a wealth of experience, including four guards who can all shoot from the outside. Westminster won't be as dominate in the post, but with such a winning tradition now built up, and a talented and athletic roster, it may not matter. The Griffins are also almost impossible to beat at home, so if they find ways to continue to win on the road, the Frontier title won't likely be leaving Salt Lake City any time soon.

**Carroll College Fighting Saints**

**2013-14:** 7-3, 0-1, No. 16  
**2012-13:** 21-10, 13-3 (2nd, At-Large NAIA Berth)  
**Head Coach:** Rachelle Sayers
Key Returnees: Kalee Junkermeier (5-10, Jr.), Bailey Snelling (5-8, Jr.), Jordan Bagley (5-10, Sr.). Outlook: The Fighting Saints were a national tournament team a year ago, but they graduated a lot of firepower, including two of the best guards to ever play in Helena. Still, like Westminster, CC has developed a winning tradition, and the Saints have the talent and depth to contend again this winter. The addition of 6-3 center Allison Sullivan, as well as the improved play of rising stars Katie Estey and Jordan Pfau add to Carroll’s already veteran returning lineup, meaning the Saints will once again be a power in the league this season.

UM-Western Bulldogs
2013-14: 6-5, 0-1
2012-13: 16-16, 7-9 (T5th)
Head Coach: Lindsay Wooley

Key Returnees: Sammi Bignell (5-10, Jr.), Roxy Thurman (5-8, Sr.). Outlook: The Bulldogs have been on the rise since Sammi Bignell arrived in Dillon. Now she’s the best player in the Frontier bar none, and Western has built a strong team around the scoring machine. The Bulldogs are savvy at shooting the three, but will have to get better in the post in order to contend for a Frontier title and a trip to the national tournament, which is certainly the goal. McCall Hasquet has stepped up in the paint so far, and Melody McCloud has played well as the point guard, but Western will need to turn up the heat now that conference play is here.

Lewis-Clark State Warriors
2013-14: 14-0, 2-0
2012-13: 9-21, 5-10 (7th)
Head Coach: Brian Orr

Key Returnees: Brittaney Niebergall (5-3, Jr.), Tannis Fuller (5-10, Jr.), Kelli Rice (5-7, Jr.). Outlook: The Warriors had a rare down year last winter, winning just nine games, finishing seventh in the Frontier and missing the NAIA tourney for the first time in nearly two decades. However, it looks like LCSC is right back in the fold. Unbeaten in the non-conference season, the Warriors have surrounded stars Brittaney Niebergall and Tanis Fuller with plenty of young talent. LCSC is deep, athletic and explosive on offense, and that could spell trouble for the rest of the league this season.

Montana Tech Orediggers
2013-14: 4-3, 0-1
2012-13: 16-13, 9-7 (3rd)
Head Coach: DeAnn Craft

Key Returnees: Kelsey DeWit (6-2, Sr.), Mandy Machinal (5-7, Jr.), Brynne Kambich (5-11, So.). Outlook: Tech has been the league's dark horse for years now, and could be again. With two of the league's best in Mandy Machinal and Kelsey DeWit back, and the additions of Kabri Emerson and Victoria Turner, the Orediggers have the talent to compete in the league this season. However, Tech made a coaching change this season, and the Diggers’ have been slow to adjust. Still, Tech is a team no one in the Frontier will want to play come March.

MSU-Northern Skylights
2013-14: 12-2, 1-0, No. 24
2012-13: 17-13, 8-8 (4th)
Head Coach: Chris Mouat

Key Returnees: Taylor Cummings (5-5, Jr.), Rachelle Bennett (5-7, Jr.), Kacie McKeon (5-4, So.), Kassie Barta (5-8, Sr.). Outlook: The Skylights graduated some big time players from last year's exciting team, which went to a second straight Frontier semifinal. However, Northern's young players from a season ago, have now blossomed, and the addition of 6-5 A’Jha Edwards, as well as true freshmen Natalee Faupel and a cast of more great newcomers, have allowed the Skylights to really get on a roll so far. A national ranking also has Northern headed into Frontier play with plenty of momentum, giving the Skylights a chance at what could be a spectacular season.

University of Great Falls Argos
2013-14: 10-4, 0-1
2012-13: 14-16, 4-12 (8th)
Head Coach: Bill Himmelberg
Key Returnees: Erin Legel (5-5, So.), Lindsey Abramson (6-2, Jr.), Taylor Stratton (5-8, So.). Outlook: If there was ever a preseason pick the league got wrong, it could be this year's UGF squad. The Argos have the best 1-2 punch in the Frontier in shooting guard Erin Legel, who leads the Frontier in scoring, and center Lindsey Abramson, who averages a double-double. UGF is a scoring club, with lots of raw talent on offense. And if the Argos can be better on defense, and get contributions from a young, but talented bench, they'll be a team that has to be reckoned with this entire season.

Rocky Mountain College Bears
2013-14: 7-3, 0-1
2012-13: 10-17, 7-9 (T5th)
Head Coach: Brian Henderson

Key Returnees: Brittany Kumm (5-4, Sr.), Brittany Myers (5-10, Sr.). Outlook: The Battlin Bears were young a year ago, and they're young again this season. Still, Rocky is a dangerous club with its up-tempo style. The Bears have good shooters and quick guards, so they'll be a tough defensive team as well. But with so much youth in the lineup, it will be tough for RMC to contend this season.

Dickinson State Blue Hawks
2013-14: 10-4, 1-0
2012-13: 8-20, 3-11
Head Coach: Mark Graupe

Key Returnees: Jess Bygate (6-1, Jr.), Mariah Duran (5-5, Sr.). Outlook: The Blue Hawk's last season in the Frontier might just be a great one. Off to a 10-4 start, new head coach Mark Graupe has brought in plenty of talent to compete in the league this season. TaRicka Linzy is a star in the making, as is JaLisa Gatlin. And if DSU can continue to torrid scoring pace it's on so far this season, and play well night in and night out on the defensive end, there's no way the Blue Hawks finish last in the Frontier before heading off to the North Star Athletic Conference.