To understand our final rankings, you have to throw away the number in parentheses. This season's DI was a brand new DI, so we were ranking teams without having a great idea about what their competition was like. After seeing some conferences soar in the postseason and others flounder, we have a better feel for what leagues were truly good.

We thought the Midwest East, which lost only middling teams from last season, would be very strong. We were right, as their second seed won the National Title, thus triggering our decision to give them four teams in the Top 25. Bowling Green, despite posting a bad score (30-3) against UCSB in the semifinals, stays at third. Their only losses on the season were to CPD Notre Dame and UCSB. National Champ Davenport's only two losses on the season? Both at the hands of Bowling Green.

Indiana and Miami haven't done much since the fall, but that's when their season is, and they won't be punished in our rankings for that. Miami finished the conference season 2-5, but lost to Davenport and Bowling Green by a combined eight points. The Redhawks also beat CPD Ohio State.

We thought NorCal would be pretty good, even though we didn't think Stanford would be their champ, and NorCal was good. National Runner-Up UCSB had to overcome a 17-point second-half deficit, in Santa Barbara, to knock off the Cardinal in the Round of 8. So, we give Sac. State, who beat Stanford, and Chico State their due credit.

Florida, turns out, is very good. We thought so. We actually had them ranked No. 2 in our preseason ranking. Florida State tied them once and played them close a second time. South Carolina split with FSU and tied Florida once. The Gamecocks also beat ACRL runner-up North Carolina soundly early this year.

SoCal had two teams who really outshined the rest of the conference -- UCSB and Loyola Marymount. UCSB went undefeated, and Loyola lost both to the Gauchos and split with USD. The Lions won the aggregate score comfortably, and USD just missed our Top 25.

We got lured into the mystique of the ACRL. Good on them for marketing well. They gave us what we love; prompt standings, match reports, an all-conference team and a good website. Judging by Maryland's 41-point loss to Florida in the Round of 16, we got suckered in. We had their teams ranked too high and had too many in the list. This list reflects reality a little better, we think.

The only conferences not represented in the Top 25 are the EPRU and New England. The EPRU was a last-second conference scratched together with four previously DII teams, and it showed when Temple was crushed 64-5 by Bowling Green. The New England champ, Northeastern, was shut out by a Harvard team that lost by 41 to Davenport and looked out of place in the semifinals.

1. (2) Davenport 12-2
2. (3) UC Santa Barbara 12-4
3. (1) Bowling Green 14-2
4. (5) Stanford 7-4
5. (4) Florida 13-1-3 (10-2-2)
6. (12) Sacramento State 5-3 (10-3)
7. (11) Minnesota 6-3 (6-4)
8. (9) Kansas State 7-3 (9-2-1)
9. (21) Florida State 9-5-3
10. (Unr.) South Carolina
11. (Unr.) Indiana
12. (13) Oregon State 6-2 (8-1)
13. (Unr.) Loyola Marymount
14. (7) Northern Colorado 7-3 (8-3)
15. (20) Texas State 6-2
16. (Unr.) Chico State
17. (16) Wisconsin 5-3 (9-4)
18. (10) Maryland 12-4
19. (6) North Carolina 6-1
20. (18) Washington State 8-1 (9-3)
21. (14) Buffalo 9-2
22. (23) Harvard 9-3
23. (Unr.) U. San Diego
24. (24) Southern Connecticut 5-5
25. (Unr.) Miami (OH)

Dropped out:
18. (18) Virginia 4-1
25. (UR) Texas 8-3

11. (13) Northeastern 6-1 (8-1)
24. (25) Southern Connecticut 5-3
22. (23) Temple 5-0