

Despite the fact nine letterwinners from last season have departed, the expectations no doubt continue to rise each season for the Ferris State University women's volleyball program.

The Bulldogs concluded the 2005 campaign with a 22-10 overall record and recorded the program's seventh 20-win season in the last eight years to date. FSU, which reached the Great Lakes Intercollegiate Athletic Conference (GLIAC) Tournament for the eighth year in a row, also advanced to the NCAA-II National Tournament for the 13th time in school history last campaign.

Ferris has compiled an impressive 179-69 (.723) mark over the past eight years and has advanced to the NCAA-II Great Lakes Regional Tournament four times in that span, including three of the last four seasons.

The Bulldog program, which traditionally has been an annual contender in one of the nation's most powerful conferences, has won 20 or more matches seven times in 10 seasons under head coach **Tia Brandel-Wilhelm**. Highlighting the stretch is a 25-7 overall mark two seasons ago when the Bulldogs captured their ninth GLIAC Championship by winning the league's annual postseason tournament for the first time ever.

There's no doubt, the Bulldogs have firmly established themselves as one of the league's best. Evidence of that form came in FSU's regular-season finale last October when Ferris stunned nationally-ranked archrival Grand Valley State 3-0 inside the friendly confines of the Ewigleben Sports Arena. GVSVU went on to win the 2005 NCAA-II National Championship, providing further proof of the GLIAC's ability to shine on a national scale.

While Brandel-Wilhelm must replace four starters from a year ago, including the only libero player the school has ever had in all-region honoree Brittny Godlewski, plenty of firepower returns in FSU's quest for a third-straight national tournament berth in 2006.

"Although we'll miss the players we lost from last year, our group of returnees is extremely dedicated and will work hard to maintain the success we've had," Brandel-Wilhelm said.

Senior outside hitter **Danielle Baucher** figures to be among the league headliners this season following an outstanding junior campaign which saw her lead the squad in both total kills (408) and digs (451). A two-time All-GLIAC First Team honoree, Baucher picked up second-team *Daktronics* All-Great Lakes Region kudos along with honorable mention American Volleyball Coaches Association (AVCA) All-Great Lakes Region recognition in 2005. She enters her senior campaign two kills shy of becoming the 14th player in school history to join the 1,000 career kills club and only the sixth Bulldog player ever to garner both 1,000 kills and digs.

"Danielle will be a go-to type of player this year and has made tremendous improvement in her defensive and attacking skills," said Brandel-Wilhelm. "She's already developed into one of the best passers we'll ever see and has really become a complete all-around player in our program."

Inside, the Bulldogs expect senior middle hitter **Karla White** to provide a valuable spark once again. The 2005 All-GLIAC First Team pick became one of the league's top interior players a season ago. She led the Bulldogs in total blocks (121) and ranked fourth in kills (267) while starting 29 of 32 outings. Her ability to perform on the interior combined with Baucher's play on the outside gives Ferris with a solid inside-outside punch.

"Karla had an incredible off-season and we expect her to be among the top middle hitters in the country," said Brandel-Wilhelm. "She's taken on a strong leadership role and is playing extremely well heading into her senior season."

The squad's third captain, junior outside hitter **Jamie Palazzolo**, provided her biggest career contribution to date last year with 272 digs, 31 service aces and 28 kills. A solid veteran performer, Palazzolo's leadership skills and strong defensive presence will help fuel the Bulldog attack.

"Jamie was injured in the spring and is excited to be back competing again," Brandel-Wilhelm said. "Both her passing and leadership ability have improved, which makes her a candidate to play a large role for us this year."

In addition to Baucher and White, the Bulldogs welcome back one other full-time starter in junior outside hitter **Lindsay Tye**. The 5-10 Tye racked up 283 kills, 211 digs, 40 blocks and 26 aces in 110 games last campaign. Brandel-Wilhelm expects her hard work in the offseason will result in improved play this season.

Besides the trio of captains and Tye, Ferris also returns five other players who saw limited action last season. The group includes four sophomores in **Katie Edwards**, **Candice Marut**, **Emily Nemmers** and **Andrea Rich** along with junior **Lindsay Johnson**.

The 5-10 Marut, who was Ferris' 2004 Bulldog Award winner, tallied a squad second-best 362 assists last year in a relief role behind departed starting setter Emily Clouse. She also contributed 124 digs and 39 kills in 73

games following a redshirt campaign in 2004.

Rich, too, provided depth at the setter spot last year with 92 assists and 30 digs in 22 games. The 5-10 Rich, who's a cousin and former prep teammate of White, also had a productive offseason and appears ready to vie for additional playing time this campaign.

Nemmers totaled only 24 digs, six kills and three aces in 44 games last season, but has proven to be a valuable reserve at various times and is often called upon to step into a key relief role.

Brandel-Wilhelm expects Johnson to challenge for additional time this year as well. The junior outside hitter appeared in 14 matches last season and has earned two varsity letters to date in the Bulldog program.

The 5-11 Edwards recorded 11 kills in only 16 games last year and picked up team Coaches Award recognition. With the loss of nine players off last year's roster, the sophomore outside hitter figures to be counted upon to contribute much more this season.

Also back in the program this year is middle hitter **Kristy Gilchrist**, who gained valuable experience as a Bulldog redshirt last season.

"All of our returning players have earned valuable experience in our program over the last couple of years," said Brandel-Wilhelm. "The improvement they've all made will be a key as we attempt to reach our goals this season."

Helping replace the loss of the departed players will be a talented incoming class of five freshman recruits featuring **Amanda Kettlewell**, **Dana Ruttle**, **Meredith Doyle**, **Sarah Lark** and **Whitney Rupp**.

Doyle and Rupp both played at the prep level for Mercy High School in Farmington Hills, Mich. As seniors in the 2005-06 season, both picked up all-region honors while helping MHS to a league runner-up finish. In addition, Doyle was chosen as a Michigan Interscholastic Volleyball Coaches Association (MIVCA) Honorable Mention Class A All-State selection. Rupp claimed all-league accolades three times in her high school career.

The 5-10 Kettlewell guided Marysville High School to a 58-1 overall record last season and the program's ninth state title in the last 10 years. The squad also won its 18th-straight district championship as Kettlewell picked up MIVCA Class B All-State Second Team kudos.

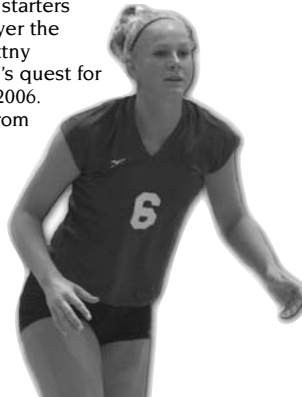
Lark, who led Alma High School to a regional tournament appearance in 2005-06, attained MIVCA Class B Third-Team All-State laurels and all-region honors after a standout senior season.

Finally, Ruttle concluded her prep career as a three-sport standout at nearby Reed City High School. The 5-7 setter earned *Big Rapids Pioneer* Player of the Year Award honors as a junior in 2004-05 and was a three-time all-conference volleyball pick.

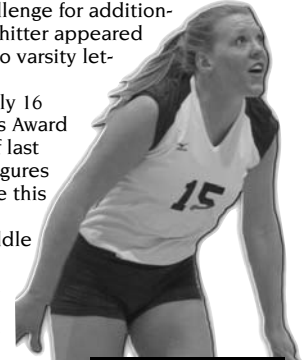
"I expect our incoming class to have a significant impact this year and provide us with a great deal of depth," said Brandel-Wilhelm.

With depth not figuring to be a key issue this season, Ferris heads into its 34th season of varsity competition knowing a championship-type of effort must be given by all 15 squad members each night out if the Bulldogs hope to claim a 10th league title and make their 14th national tournament appearance.

"From top to bottom, there's not a better Division II volleyball conference," Brandel-Wilhelm said. "The league is always extremely balanced and we'll have to be prepared to play one match at a time."



DANIELLE BAUCHER



KARLA WHITE

Returns

No.	Player	Pos.	Yr.	Ht.	Exp.
1	Katie Edwards	OH	So.	5-11	1L
3	Candice Marut	S/OH	So.	5-10	1L
6	Danielle Baucher	OH	Sr.	5-10	3L
7	Lindsay Johnson	OH	Jr.	5-10	2L
8	Jamie Palazzolo	OH	Jr.	5-7	2L
15	Karla White	MH	Sr.	6-0	3L
17	Lindsay Tye	OH	Jr.	5-10	2L
18	Andrea Rich	S	So.	5-10	1L
19	Emily Nemmers	OH/MH	So.	6-0	1L

Newcomers

No.	Player	Pos.	Yr.	Ht.	Exp.
2	Amanda Kettlewell	OH/MH	Fr.	5-10	HS
4	Dana Ruttle	S	Fr.	5-7	HS
5	Meredith Doyle	OH	Fr.	5-9	HS
9	Sarah Lark	MH	Fr.	5-11	HS
13	Whitney Rupp	LIB	Fr.	5-8	HS
20	Kristy Gilchrist	MH	Fr.	6-0	RS

MH – Middle Hitter

OH – Outside Hitter

S – Setter

DS – Defensive Specialist

LIB – Libero

RS – Redshirted