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GLIAC Men's Basketball Coaches Tab Northern Michigan and Findlay for 2003-04 Division Titles

BAY CITY, Mich. -- The head men's basketball coaches of the Great Lakes Intercollegiate Athletic Conference (GLIAC) chose Northern Michigan University and the University of Findlay to win the league's North and South Division titles, respectively.

Northern Michigan received five of the six first-place votes it was eligible for. Michigan Tech University received the two remaining first-place votes and finished second in the poll, while Northwood University placed third in the balloting. Ferris State University edged out Grand Valley State University for fourth place by one point (17-16). Saginaw Valley State University in sixth (12 points), and Lake Superior State University in seventh (9) round out the Division.

Findlay received all five first-place votes it was eligible for to rank first in the South Division. Second-place Gannon University finished seven points behind the Oilers (18). Wayne State University finished one point ahead of Mercyhurst College (15-14) to finish third. Hillsdale College (12) and Ashland University (6) placed fifth and sixth, respectively.

Each of the GLIAC's 13 coaches ranked the teams in the division in which they play, but were not allowed to vote for their own team. The first-place team on the North Division ballot received six points, while the second-place team received five points, etc. The first-place team in the South Division received five points, while the second-place team received four points, etc.

Michigan Tech defeated Findlay in the finals of the 2002-03 GLIAC postseason tournament, claiming the school's second conference championship. The 2003-04 GLIAC tournament quarterfinal games will be played on Tuesday, Mar. 2, on campus sites with the higher seeds hosting the games. The semifinals and finals will be hosted by the highest remaining seed on Friday, Mar. 5 and Saturday, Mar. 6.

GLIAC basketball teams open play on Saturday, Nov. 15 with conference play beginning Thursday, Dec. 4.

2003-04 GLIAC Preseason Men's Basketball Coaches Poll

<i>North Division</i>		
<i>Rank</i>	<i>School (first-place votes)</i>	<i>Points</i>
1.	Northern Michigan (5)	35
2.	Michigan Tech (2)	32
3.	Northwood	26
4.	Ferris State	17
5.	Grand Valley State	16
6.	Saginaw Valley State	12
7.	Lake Superior State	9
<i>South Division</i>		
1.	Findlay (5)	25
2.	Gannon	18
3.	Wayne State	15
4.	Mercyhurst (1)	14
5.	Hillsdale	12
6.	Ashland	6

2002-2003 GLIAC Men's Basketball Final Standings

<i>North Division</i>	
<i>School</i>	<i>Record (GLIAC)</i>
Michigan Tech	29-3 (17-1)
Northern Michigan	15-14 (10-8)
Grand Valley State	14-14 (8-10)
Saginaw Valley State	13-14 (7-11)
Ferris State	11-15 (7-11)
Lake Superior State	12-15 (6-12)
Northwood	10-16 (6-12)
<i>South Division</i>	
Findlay	23-8 (13-4)
Gannon	20-10 (11-6)
Wayne State	13-14 (9-8)
Hillsdale	16-12 (8-9)
Ashland	16-11 (8-9)
Mercyhurst	12-15 (4-13)

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The following are season previews on each of the GLIAC's 13 Men's Basketball Teams:

Ashland University: Head coach Roger Lyons is in his 11th season at Ashland and this is by far his youngest team. The Eagles don't return anyone from last season's 16-11 team. Lyons, who has a 165-110 career mark, will rely on 5-10 junior guard **Michael Fowler** and 6-4 freshman guard **Vahn Knight** to help steer the Eagles in the right direction.

Ferris State University: The Bulldogs have added increased athleticism and depth with the addition of eight newcomers as they attempt to build on last season's 11-15 overall record and fourth-place 7-11 GLIAC North Division finish, which both represented the school's best performances since the 1997-98 campaign. Second-year head coach Bill Sall, who has a 16-23 (.410) career mark to date, returns four starters and seven letterwinners highlighted by the backcourt trio of senior **Willie Thomas (Columbus, Ohio/Eastmoor Academy)**, junior **Carlton Epps (Benton Harbor)** and sophomore point guard **Dennis Springs (Toledo, Ohio/Scott)**. Ferris, which has won more league titles (nine) and made more NCAA Tournament appearances (six) than any other GLIAC school, faces a demanding non-conference schedule including a Nov. 17th date at NCAA Division I Central Michigan.

University of Findlay: The 2003-04 edition of The University of Findlay's men's basketball team looks to be one of their best in some time. The Oilers, coached by Ron Niekamp (19th season at 377-151), return four starters from last year's squad who finished 23-8 including their second consecutive GLIAC South Division title. The nationally ranked Oilers will be led by senior forward **Brad Rethman (Ft. Recovery, OH)** and sophomore guard **Dustin Pfeifer (Washington Court House, OH)**. Rethman returns after being named a First Team All-GLIAC performer while Pfeifer returns as the reigning GLIAC Freshman of the Year. After having a solid recruiting class and with so many key components returning, #9 Findlay looks to have one of their more successful seasons in recent memory.

Grand Valley State University: GVSU head basketball coach Terry Smith is set to embark on his seventh year at the helm of the Laker program. Smith returns six letterwinners that will join a talented crew of newcomers for the 2003-04 season. Sophomore guard **Courtney James** returns after gathering votes as the GLIAC Freshman of the Year last season. James averaged 11.5 points and 3.6 rebounds, while dishing out a team-high 96 assists from his point guard position. Senior forward **Melvin White** tallied

7.7 points per game and notched a team-high 54 three-pointers in his first season with the Lakers. Sophomore forward **Jeff Grauzer** chipped in 5.8 points while seeing a significant amount of time as a true freshman. A trio of sophomores, guard **Jerry Wallace** and forwards **Eric Voisin** and **Nate Bassett**, will also be called upon for significant contributions. Junior guard Marcus Wallace returns after sitting out last season. The 6-4 forward was an All-GLIAC performer at Ferris State before transferring to GVSU. Junior center Eric Chess is set to patrol the paint for the Lakers after two stellar years at Grand Rapids Community College.

Gannon University: Gannon takes aim at the GLIAC South Division Championship with several streaks on the line. The Golden Knights have posted four consecutive 20-win seasons, earning a NCAA Division II Tournament bid in each of those seasons. In addition, the squad has qualified for the GLIAC Tournament in seven straight campaigns. Head coach Jerry Slocum enters his eighth season at Gannon with a 139-59 record. The veteran bench mentor is sixth among NCAA Division II active heads coaches with 540 career victories in 28 seasons. Two starters and nine lettermen return from last year's 20-10 squad that dropped an 81-74 decision to Kentucky Wesleyan in the opening round of the NCAA Tournament. Senior **Brandon Andrews** (12.8 ppg, 4.8 rpg) and junior **Geoff Husted** (14.1 ppg, 7.1 rpg) headline the returning group of players.

Hillsdale College: The Hillsdale men's basketball team will have a different look to it this season after graduating five seniors from last year's squad that went 16-12, while advancing to the GLIAC Tournament for the fourth straight season. Sixth-year head coach Ed Douma, who holds an 87-53 overall record at Hillsdale in five seasons, made up the loss of seven total letterwinners by bringing in five freshmen to go along with a strong core of six returnees. Key returnees will include HC's lone senior **Tom Farmer** and sophomore guards **Cory Coe** and **John Hamood**. Farmer played in 24 games last season, averaging 5.8 points per game. Coe is Hillsdale's top returning scorer, averaging 8.6 points per game in 2002-03, while Hamood started 25 of 28 games at point guard, finishing second on the team with 80 assists. Sophomore **Rodney Whaley**, who redshirted last year, returns after averaging 9.9 points per contest in 2001-02.

Lake Superior State University: First-year head coach Mike Fitzner has had a smooth transition from assistant to head coach since replacing Marty McDermott in June. Fitzner, who held the assistant's position for four years, had

a hand in recruiting all of the current Laker players. LSSU, which was 12-15 last season, welcomes a new crop of post players includes St. Ignace (Mich.) native **Jim Clement**, a 6-foot-7, 202-pound guard/forward who played two seasons at the University of Toledo. Clement and junior guard **Steve MacDonald** are former high school teammates. Junior forward **Scott Jamison** was one of the Lakers' two double-figure scorers in 2002-03. He scored 20 or more points in six games, including a season-high 30 points in a 92-79 victory over Saginaw Valley on Feb. 1. Jamison averaged 13.8 ppg. Senior guard **Paul Kurtz** (6-4, 185) averaged 9.3 ppg.

Mercyhurst College: The Gary Manchel era begins Nov. 16 when Mercyhurst opens the 2003-04 season against Columbia Union at 8 pm. The Lakers return seven players and four starters from a team that finished 12-15 overall last season and 4-13 in the Great Lakes Intercollegiate Athletic Conference. Among the seven returnees are the team's top three scorers – 6-6 senior forward **Josh Helm** (18.0ppg, 8.3rpg), 5-11 senior guard **Justin Shouse** (14.4ppg, 129 assists) , and 5-10 sophomore guard **Torry Mitchell** (14.1ppg). Also back are 6-4 sophomore G/F **Andy Kubinski**, 6-7 junior forward **Steve Horner**, 6-5 senior G/F **Mike Marshall**, and 7-1 sophomore center **Jeff Daisley**. 6-3 guard **Michael Heine** is expected to see his share of action after red shirting last year. Mercyhurst hopes to benefit from a schedule that has nine of the first ten games at the Mercyhurst Athletic Center.

Michigan Tech University: Michigan Tech men's basketball program enter a new era in 2003-04. Led by coach of the year Kevin Luke (180-84, 9 seasons), the Huskies try to reload after losing two All-Americans and four others that combined to start 430 games and play a total of 14,400 minutes over the last four years. The current roster has just one player with collegiate starting experience. Despite that, the Huskies have high hopes of continuing the program's success. Start with a pair of potential All-Americans — junior guard **Jason Marcotte** (Ishpeming, Mich./Westwood) and junior forward **Josh Buettner** (Shawano, Wis.) — who both played in every single game of Tech's 56-6 run over the past two seasons. Add to them a group of seven highly-skilled recruits and eight other returning players itching to get their chance and Michigan Tech's fourth straight GLIAC North Division title is within sight.

Northern Michigan University: After a 16-13 campaign in 2002-03 the Northern Michigan University men's basketball team has all the key players back from last year, with seven letterwinners returning, and a little depth mixed

in as well. The 'Cats had four players average in double-digit scoring last year. **Billy Hill** leads the way with 14.3 ppg, **Antwuan Holt** is next at 10.5 ppg, **Milan Azanjac** at 10.1 ppg and **Marco Volcy** 10.0 ppg round out the top four. **Ricky Volcy** is a newcomer who could find his way into the mix very quickly. Dean Ellis is back for his 18th season at NMU. He enters the 2003-04 season with a 276-203 record.

Northwood University: Optimism abounds on the Northwood campus as head coach Bob Taylor's (7th season, 90-73) squad looks for an exciting 2003-04 campaign. Two-time First Team All-GLIAC pick **Dallas Logan** (Detroit/Loyola) leads a well rounded attack after ranking second in the GLIAC with his 19.1 per game scoring average. Junior forward **Derek Fillmore** (Hope, MI/Sanford-Meridian) ranked second in the country in three-point shooting at 48.9%, while junior **D.J. Hughes** (Saginaw/Swan Valley) tossed in 11.0 points per game with his tenacious style of play. Sophomore guard **Nemanja Kreckovic** (Belgrade, Serbia) averaged 13.4 points per game as one of the most exciting freshman in the GLIAC.

Saginaw Valley State University: The Cardinals, under the direction of head coach Dean Lockwood (6th year, 55-77), return seven letterwinners from a squad that finished 14-13 a year ago. SVSU tied for fourth in the GLIAC North with a 7-11 record. **Anthony Parker** returns in the frontcourt for the Cards. The 6-5 junior averaged 18.3 points per game last year which led the team. Senior **Maurice Brown** tied for first in rebounding in the GLIAC last year.

Wayne State University: The Warriors return five of their top six scorers from a 13-14 squad (9-8) that placed third in the South Division last year. Five transfers and four freshmen join six veterans for third-year head coach David Greer and the Wayne State Warriors in 2003-04. Greer, who owns an overall career record of 45-38 in three years, has guided WSU to back-to-back GLIAC Tournament appearances in his first two seasons. Senior **Kendall LeSure**, who was selected to the All-GLIAC South First Team, looks to start this year where he left off a year ago. He scored in double figures the final nine contests, including five 20-plus point performances. Also back on the court is the squad's leading rebounder (6.4) and second-leading scorer (12.6) in senior **Kendon Edwards**. Classmate **Oscar Sanders** is the only returnee who started all 27 games last year. Sanders dished out 100 assists, sixth in the GLIAC. Junior **A.J. Parker** and sophomores **Morris Hall** and **Ethan Banks** also return for WSU.