

# Ferris State Men's Basketball

## 2003-04 SEASON PREVIEW

After winning only 21 games in the four previous seasons combined, not much was expected of the Ferris State men's basketball program entering the 2002-03 campaign. The Bulldogs, however, quickly exceeded expectations in their first season under head coach **Bill Sall**.

Despite being picked to finish seventh in the Great Lakes Intercollegiate Athletic Conference's (GLIAC) North Division following a 4-22 mark in 2001-02, Ferris was able to quiet many of the skeptics with an 11-15 overall record and a fourth-place 7-11 finish a year ago.

Along the way, FSU posted wins over West Michigan rivals Calvin and Grand Valley State before concluding the year a game shy of making the program's sixth league tourney appearance. Both Ferris' overall record and league finish were its best since compiling a 21-12 record and claiming the GLIAC Tournament championship in 1997-98.

To say the least, the bar was raised in Sall's initial season at the helm.

While the Bulldogs enter the 2003-04 campaign with their sights set on continuing the climb they began in the GLIAC standings last year, the challenge won't be any easier.

"We have one of the toughest schedules in Division II in front of us," Sall said. "However, we're a young team and it's important for us to go through the fire early."

Despite the return of four starters and seven letterwinners from a season ago, Sall must find a way to both replace departed 6-

10 center Adam Anderson, a two-time first-team all-league selection who is currently playing overseas in Egypt, along with properly meshing the addition of eight newcomers.

"We'll have more depth than we had last year due to the guys we added," said Sall. "Although the newcomers will go through an adjustment period, we have enough returners who know what's expected to help them along."

Highlighting Ferris State's list of returnees is senior guard **Willie Thomas**, who established himself as one of the league's top perimeter shooters last season by registering the program's third-best single-season made three-point field goal total with 69 treys. His three-point marksmanship and veteran leadership will be critical this season as Ferris attempts to develop an interior presence with a roster including only three players 6-7 or above.

Spearheading Ferris State's up-tempo offensive attack will be quick sophomore guard **Dennis Springs**. The 5-6 Springs totaled 155 assists in his first campaign, which represented the fourth-highest single-season figure in school history.

Junior guard **Carlton Epps**, a two-time team Defensive Most Valuable Player Award recipient, has quietly surfaced as one of FSU's most reliable performers in his two seasons. The Benton Harbor native recorded the program's eighth-best single-season steals mark with a team-leading 58 thefts in 2001-02. Epps, who was Ferris' third-leading scorer (11.6 ppg) last year, presently ranks eighth on FSU's career chart with 109 steals in 50 career appearances.

Epps' twin brother, sophomore guard **Corey Epps**, tallied 8.8 points per game off the bench a year ago and will be called upon to provide the Bulldogs with another solid contribution in the backcourt.

Senior forward/center **Nathan Wruble**, who along with Thomas represents Ferris' 2003-04 senior class, returns the majority of the Bulldogs' playing experience inside. The two-time GLIAC All-Academic Team selection started 24 games as a junior and was the squad's second-leading rebounder (4.4 rpg).

Besides Wruble, Ferris State's only other returning frontcourt presence is sophomore forward **Jeffery Shanahan**. He averaged 11 minutes per game en route to earning Most Improved Player Award accolades in 2002-03.

Junior guard **David Clarke** is also back to provide depth after appearing in 11 contests a year ago. Freshman **John Terrell**, a 6-7 forward/center, has the tools and size to be a regular member of the playing rotation after a redshirt year.

One of Sall's biggest objectives heading into his first campaign was to bring respect back to the program. His success fulfilling that goal speaks for itself as the FSU staff was able to land a talented crop of newcomers.

"Our new guys provide us with both increased depth and added athleticism," Sall said. "Our practices have become more competitive as guys are fighting for positions so hopefully it will allow us to play at a higher level."

Leading the list of fresh faces is junior college forward **Willie Burrel**, who attained second-team National Junior College Athletic Association (NJCAA) All-America recognition while leading Muskegon Community College to a 21-8 overall record and a Michigan Community College Athletic Association playoff berth during the 2002-03 campaign.

Among the six incoming freshmen is Detroit Murray-Wright's **Michael Daniels**. The honorable mention 2002-03 *Detroit Free Press* and *Detroit News* Class A All-State pick tallied 15.1 points and 11.4 rebounds per game as a prep senior. His 6-6 frame should boost the attack.

Follow freshman **Terrance Shaw**, a first-team 2002-03 *Associated Press* Class B All-State honoree, will supply versatility in the frontcourt. He scored 21 points and grabbed 11 rebounds per game for Bridgeport High School last year.

Ferris also inked two-sport standout **C.J. Van Wieren**, whose competitiveness and athletic ability could be an instant fit in Sall's system. Also a member of the FSU football team, Van Wieren garnered both 2002-03 *Detroit Free Press* Class A Sixth-Team All-State and *Associated Press* Honorable Mention All-State basketball kudos last campaign on the wing.

Sall's first signee, Cedar Springs' **Adam Veltkamp**, was a three-time team captain and holds the Michigan High School Athletic Association's (MHSAA) fifth-best all-time single-game blocked shots performance (13). His 6-8 addition helps address the Bulldogs' lack of height inside.

**Joe DeMartin**, the younger brother of current Ferris State women's basketball senior guard Lucy DeMartin, compiled 16 points and three assists per game as a guard in 2002-03 while leading Mason High School to an 18-5 overall record and a MHSAA Class A district final finish.

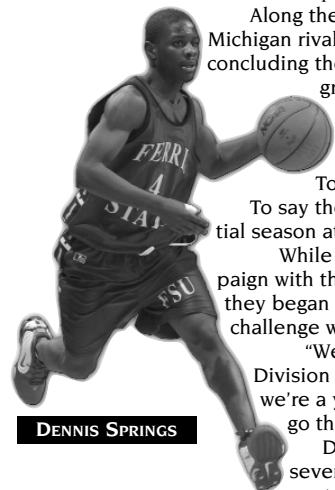
Also on the roster is 5-9 freshman guard **Reggie Prince**, who averaged 25 points per contest as a senior at Saginaw's Buena Vista High School.

"We're focused on seeing improvement early in the year," Sall said. "Defensively, we have to continue to get better than last year."

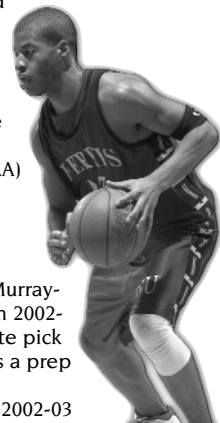
Although Ferris expects more entering the 2003-04 campaign than it did last season, a demanding schedule complicates the task. FSU won't play in its own facility until the new year and must play 11 of its first 12 contests on the road including an early season date (Nov. 17) at NCAA Division I Central Michigan.

The Bulldogs brought respect back last season to a program which has won more league titles (nine) and made more NCAA Tournament appearances (six) than any other GLIAC member. The expectations, of course, continue to rise this campaign.

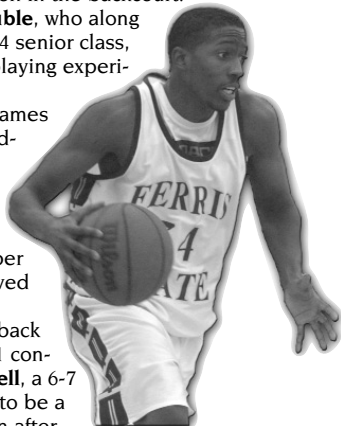
"Our first goal is to have a winning record in the league and reach the postseason tournament," said Sall. "To reach those goals, we have to be ready to compete for the things at stake when GLIAC play rolls around."



DENNIS SPRINGS



CARLTON EPPS



WILLIE THOMAS

### Returnees

No.	Player	Pos.	Yr.	Ht.	Exp.
3	Dennis Springs	G	So.	5-6	1L
10	David Clarke	G	Jr.	5-11	1L
20	Corey Epps	G	Jr.	6-2	2L
22	Carlton Epps	G	Jr.	6-2	2L
30	Jeffery Shanahan	F	So.	6-6	1L
34	Willie Thomas	G	Sr.	6-4	1L
42	Nathan Wruble	F	Sr.	6-7	3L

### Newcomers

No.	Player	Pos.	Yr.	Ht.	Exp.
4	Joe DeMartin	G	Fr.	6-1	HS
12	Terrance Shaw	F	Fr.	6-5	HS
14	Reggie Prince	G	Fr.	5-9	HS
23	Michael Daniels	F	Fr.	6-6	HS
32	Willie Burrel	F	Jr.	6-6	T
33	C.J. Van Wieren	G/F	Fr.	6-4	HS
44	John Terrell	F/C	Fr.	6-7	R
54	Adam Veltkamp	F/C	Fr.	6-8	HS

G – Guard  
HS – High School

F – Forward  
T – Transfer

C – Center  
R – Redshirt